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HOW TO DRAW

GETTING STARTED



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HOW TO DRAW

THE BEST OF BASIC TRAINING

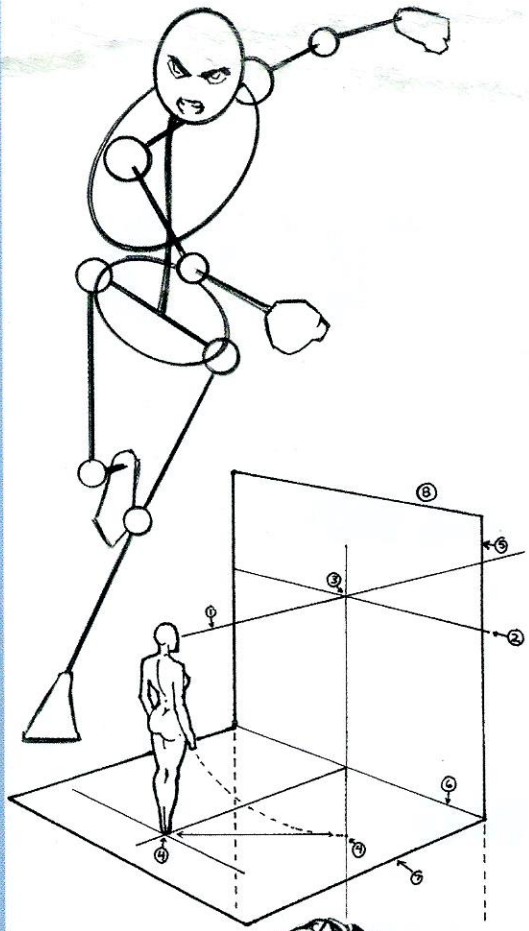
GETTING STARTED

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CONTENTS





4 | CHAPTER ONE: TOOLS OF THE TRADE

5 | **ART ESSENTIALS** by the Wizard Staff

9 | CHAPTER TWO: BASICS

10 | **ROUGHS** by Jim Calafiore

14 | **BLOCKS & CUBES** by Ty Templeton

18 | **FIGURE CONSTRUCTION** by Jim Calafiore

22 | **BASIC PERSPECTIVE** by Bart Sears

24 | **ADVANCED PERSPECTIVE** by Jim Calafiore

28 | **USING PERSPECTIVE** by Jim Calafiore

32 | **SHADING** by Martin Wagner

36 | CHAPTER THREE: ANATOMY

37 | **STRUCTURE** by Kevin Maguire

41 | **HEAD & TORSO** by Kevin Maguire

46 | **EYES** by Brian Bolland

50 | **NOSES** by Brian Bolland

53 | **MOUTHS** by Brian Bolland

58 | **HAIR** by Steve McNiven

61 | **FACES** by Justiniano

65 | **FACIAL EXPRESSIONS** by Kevin Maguire

69 | **ARMS & LEGS** by Matt Haley

74 | **HANDS** by Gary Frank

78 | **FEET** by Darick Robertson

82 | **SULTRY WOMEN** by Adam Hughes

86 | **REALISTIC WOMEN** by Terry Moore

90 | **SEX APPEAL** by Michael Turner

94 | **TEENS & CHILDREN** by Tom Grummett

100 | **PROPORTIONS** by Dale Keown

104 | **PIECING TOGETHER ANATOMY** by Jim Balent

108 | CHAPTER FOUR: CHARACTERS

109 | **CREATING CHARACTERS** by Joe Kubert

114 | **BODY LANGUAGE** by Matt Haley

118 | **ADVANCED BODY LANGUAGE** by Jim Calafiore

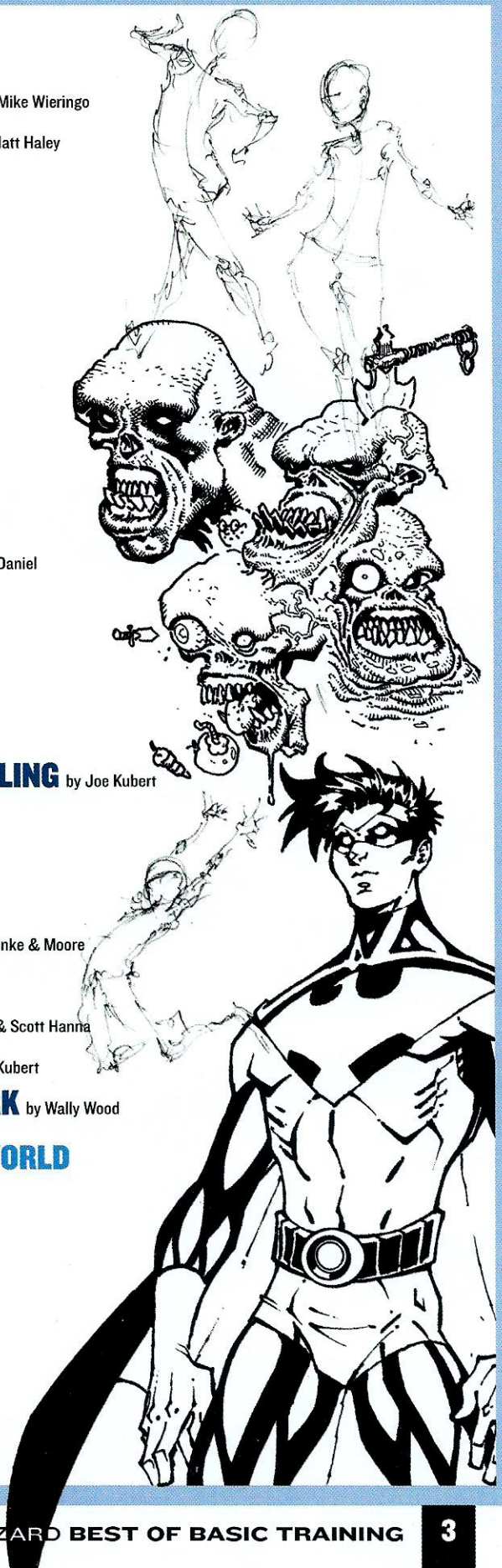
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123 | **MOVEMENT & MOTION** by Bart Sears
127 | **MAKING CHARACTERS MOVE** by Mike Wieringo
131 | **DYNAMIC FORESHORTENING** by Matt Haley
135 | **ACTION SCENES** by Jim Lee
141 | **FLIGHT** by Phil Jimenez
146 | **ENERGY EFFECTS** by Phil Jimenez
150 | **COSTUMES** by Rama Gottumukkala
155 | **DESIGNING COSTUMES** by ChrisCross

158 | **CHAPTER FIVE: ARCHETYPES**
159 | **SUPER MEN** by Scott Kolins
162 | **SUPER WOMEN** by Don Kramer
165 | **ACROBATS** by Adrian Alphona
168 | **COSTUMED VIGILANTES** by Scott McDaniel
172 | **BRUTES** by Gene Ha
176 | **ARMORED VILLAINS** by Ethan Van Sciver
179 | **SIDEKICKS** by Todd Nauck

182 | **CHAPTER SIX: PAGE DESIGN**
183 | **FUNDAMENTALS OF STORYTELLING** by Joe Kubert
188 | **PANEL SEQUENCE** by Mike Wieringo
191 | **LAYING OUT A PAGE** by Norm Breyfogle
195 | **PANEL LAYOUT** by Terry Dodson
198 | **ADVANCED LAYOUT** by Frank, Lieber, Mahnke & Moore
201 | **SPLASH PAGES** by Jim Calafiore
205 | **EVOLUTION OF A PAGE** by Tom Raney & Scott Hanna
211 | **PROFESSIONAL CRITICISM** by Joe Kubert
216 | **22 PANELS THAT ALWAYS WORK** by Wally Wood

218 | **CHAPTER SEVEN: CREATE YOUR WORLD**
219 | **REFERENCE** by Joe Kubert
224 | **PHOTO REFERENCE** by Greg Land
229 | **TEXTURE** by Art Adams
233 | **METALLIC SURFACES** by Jim Calafiore
237 | **ANIMALS** by Sean Chen
245 | **MONSTERS** by Doug Mahnke
252 | **VEHICLES** by Sean Chen





YOURWORKSPACE

Setting up your studio is when you really get to feel like an artist. First, you'll want an adjustable drawing table, so art can be placed at a 90-degree angle to your vision; these typically cost around $300-$400, though cheaper models are available. Besides a comfortable chair, you'll also need an overhead light for your table. Legendary Spider-Man artist John Romita Sr. says, "I recommend a lamp that has dual incandescent/fluorescent bulbs. They emit light that simulates outdoor light, and they're much easier on the eyes." You might even want a mirror to help with facial expressions. Decorate your workspace with items that'll inspire you—from posters to action figures to original art you've acquired—and you're good to go!



THEBESTREFERENCES

Here is just a sample of the resources at your disposal when learning to draw like a pro. If you find you need help in one area, naturally, you should seek out as many references as possible to strengthen your skills.

ANATOMY AND FIGURE DRAWING

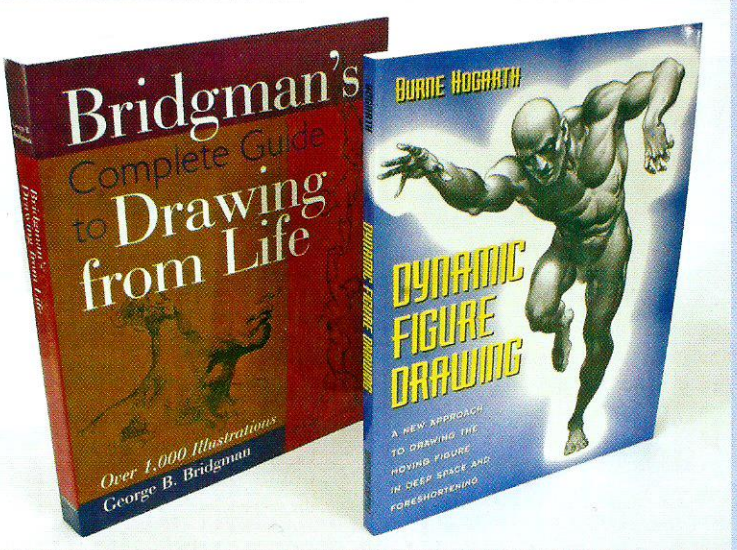
- *Dynamic Figure Drawing, Dynamic Anatomy, Dynamic Heads and Hands* by Burne Hogarth—the artist who made his rep by drawing *Tarzan* newspaper strips back in the '30s and '40s teaches you the basics
- *George Bridgman's Complete Guide to Drawing from Life*—a collection that provides tons of dynamic poses and collects the separate Bridgman volumes in one handy tome
- *Human Anatomy for Artists* by Eliot Goldfinger—a bit pricey, but very comprehensive

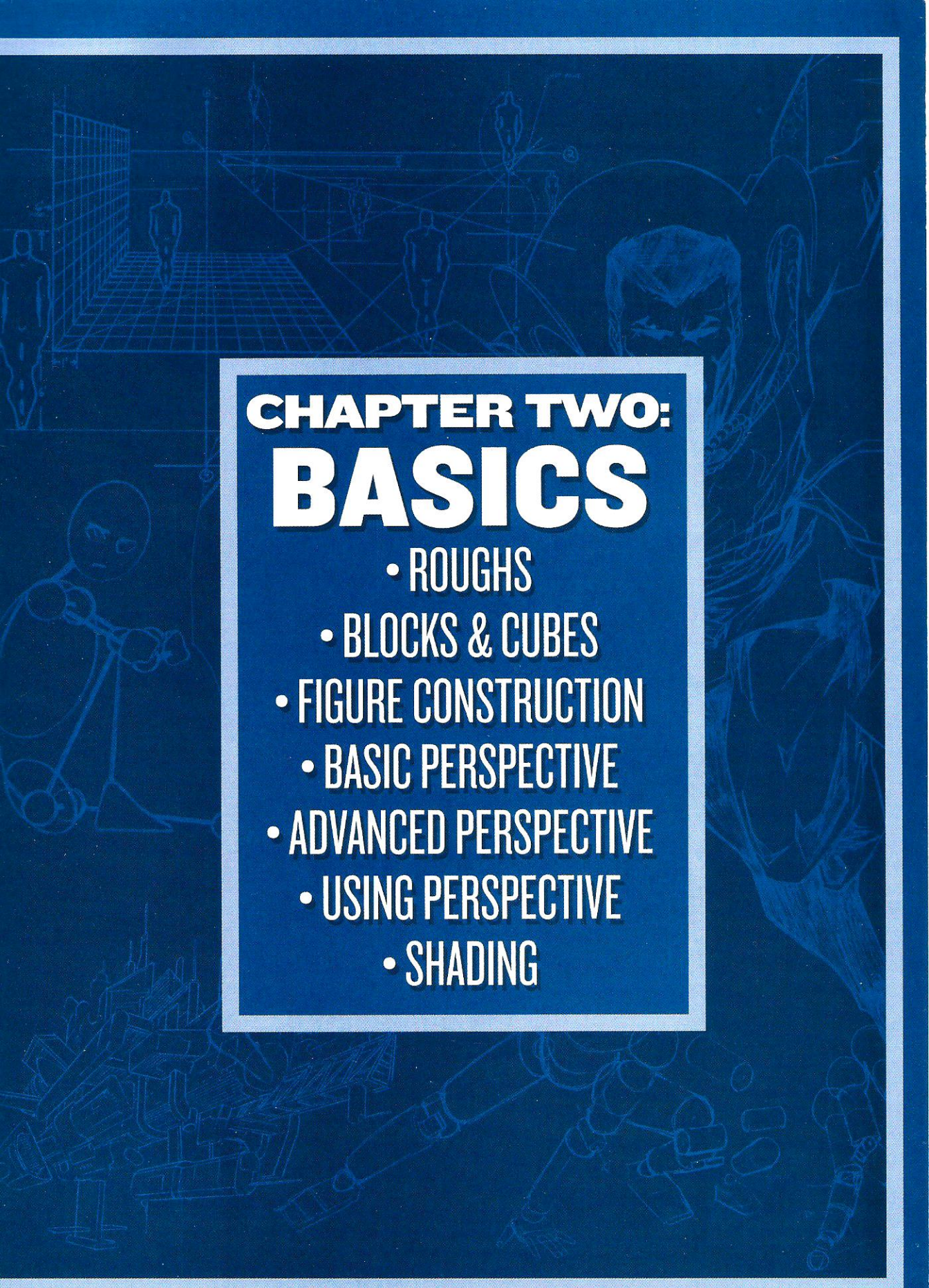
THEORY

- *Comics and Sequential Art* by Will Eisner—the creator of the Spirit instructs on the nuts and bolts of storytelling
- *Understanding Comics* and *Reinventing Comics* by Scott McCloud—both books provide fresh ideas, advice and viewpoints on the comic art form

COMIC MASTERPIECES

- *Watchmen* by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons—a revolutionary approach to superhero storytelling
- *Batman: Year One* by Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli—a beautiful use of light and shadow
- *The Deadman Collection* by Neal Adams—a look at the innovative, dynamic art of Adams at his late-'60s peak



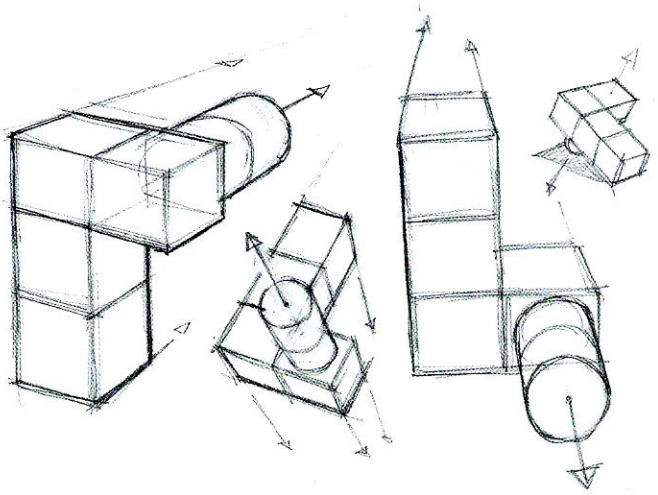


CHAPTER TWO: BASICS

- ROUGHS
- BLOCKS & CUBES
- FIGURE CONSTRUCTION
- BASIC PERSPECTIVE
- ADVANCED PERSPECTIVE
- USING PERSPECTIVE
- SHADING

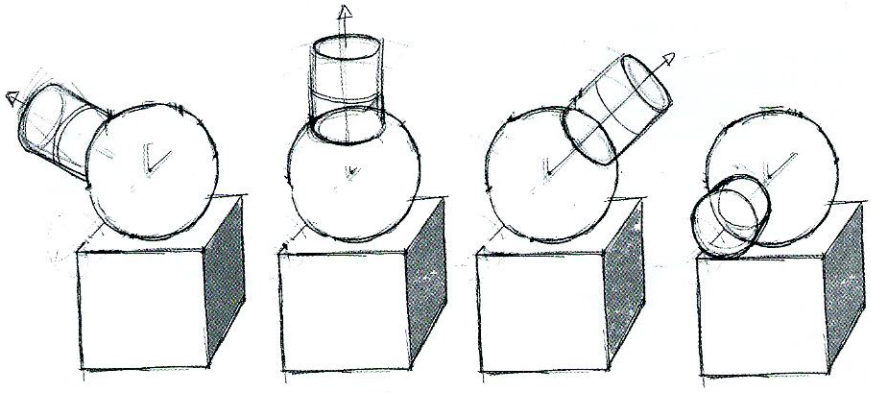
GETINTOSHAPE

Now that you've become an expert at drawing a shape with two simple shapes glued together, I want you to step up to three simple shapes glued together, and start moving it in space with your mind. This monstrosity (made from two cracker boxes and a juice can) is only difficult when you see it as a single object. When you consider only its component parts, we're still not doing anything more complex than on the last page. Try it with shapes made from four basic objects, or five.



ODDBALLS

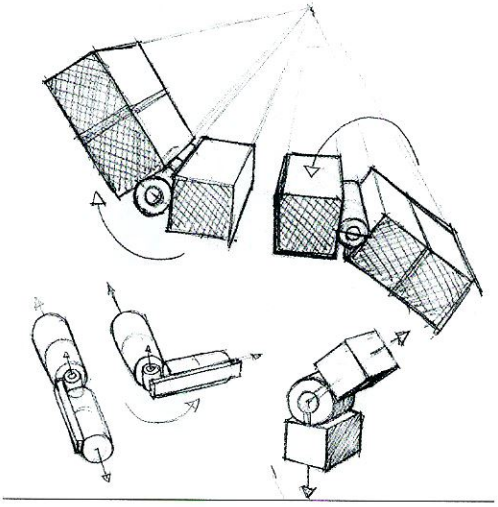
Now that you've gotten used to spinning solid objects in space, it's time to do some thinking about objects with moving parts. In this figure below, we see the object (ball and can stuck together), moving around on top of a stationary box. As odd-looking as this is, it is essentially a ball and socket joint in action. Make sure the "can" always points towards the center of the ball and that the ball is always centered on the box, and you're moving just like a shoulder or hip bone, but we're still using basic shapes. Try this exercise from different angles than the one in the figure below. Flip the box over and then move the joint more.



FLEXYOURMUSCLES

Now for the hinge joint, where two objects bend at angles to each other, but only in one direction. A hinge can bend forward, but not sideways or backwards and not up and down. Study the boxes and tube joints I've drawn here and notice which directions they can and cannot bend. See how perspective affects them. Which parallel lines still meet at the vanishing points and which ones don't when bending the hinge?

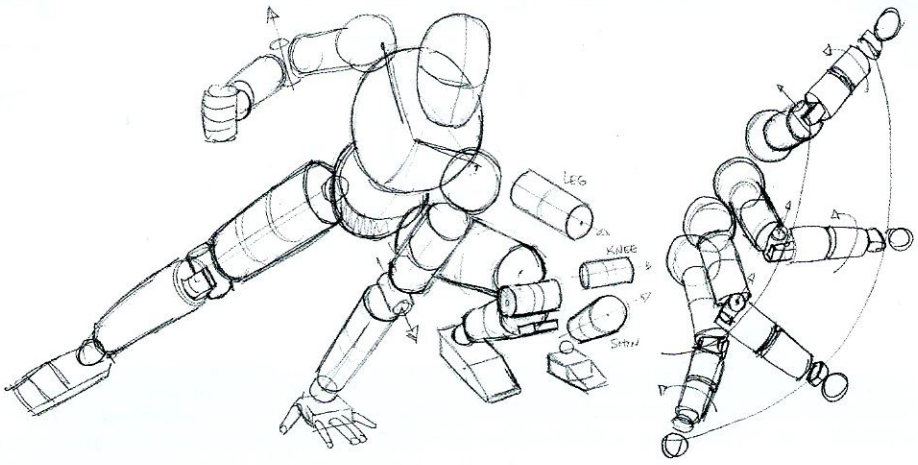
Also in the illustration, I've drawn a pair of cans and a plank of wood bending around a hinge joint. You might notice how closely these basic and simple shapes can look like the elbow joint of a human arm.



TOTALLYTUBULAR

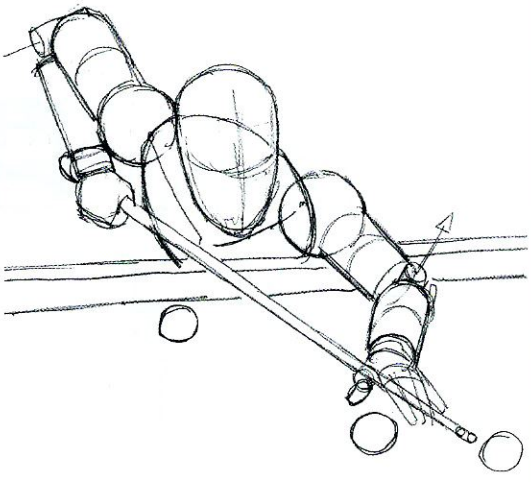
Now that you're an expert in drawing tubes and boxes in 3-D space and moving them along simple hinges, it's time to apply it to a human figure. Reducing the arms and legs to tubes, and the knees, hips, elbows and shoulders into hinge and ball/socket joints, makes the construction of figures much easier to imagine in space.

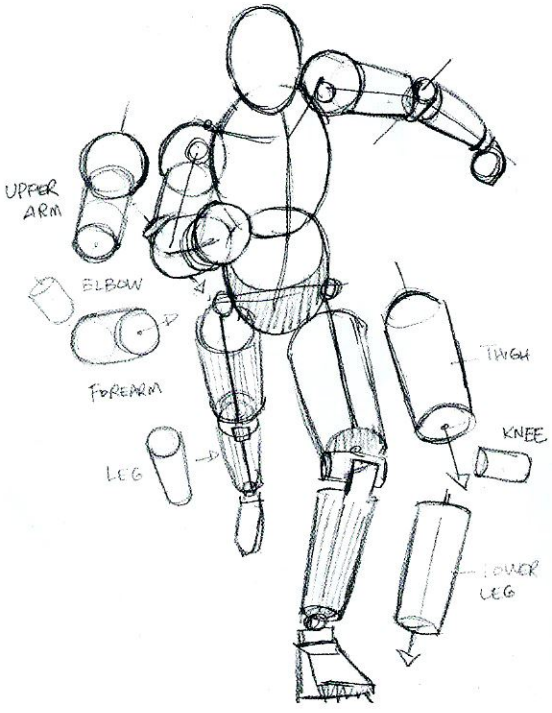
Forget, for a moment, the complex anatomy of bone shapes, tendons, etc.—and think of the limbs made entirely out of tin cans.



POOLYOURSKILLS

The pool player to the right has arms in a position that would drive you nuts if you tried to construct and foreshorten them using skeletal and muscular anatomy as your building blocks. But imagined as a set of basic tubes, balls and hinge joints, it's actually not that hard to draw. (The hands, which contain one fourth of all the bones in your body are, unfortunately, a whole other lesson—like on page 74!)





THERUNNINGMAN

This running figure shows the legs both coming at you and receding. Because we apply the simple rules of perspective to the basic "can" shapes of the legs and knees, it's easy to foreshorten them and keep them in proportion. The left leg appears on the page as much larger than the right leg, because it is moving forward of the hips and the right leg is moving back from the hips.

Look at photos or drawings of the human figure and try to visualize this ball-and-can construction. Photos of athletes in action (golfers, swimmers, basketball players) give you the best positions to learn from.

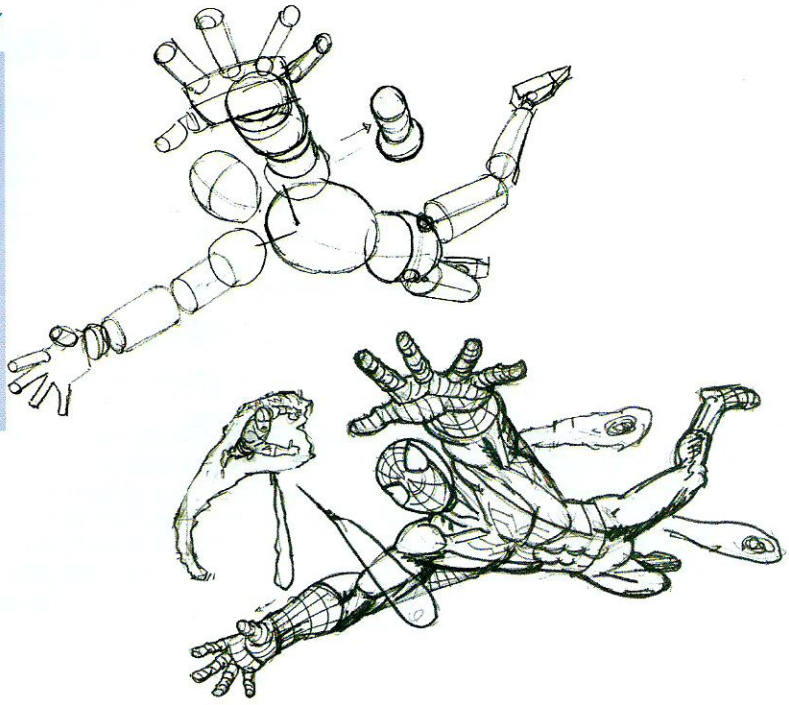
NOTE: Remember, in moving figures, if the left leg is forward, the right arm is forward. Bodies move in balance.

BLOCKPARTY

Let's put it all together.

These are drawings from an issue of *Spider-Man/Human Torch* I drew for Marvel Comics (now available as the collected series *I'm With Stupid*, written by Dangerous Dan Slott).

For this leaping figure, all four of the limbs are moving in different directions, and are seen from different angles. The anatomy was laid overtop of the ball and tube shapes without having to "figure it out" from scratch, since the basic figure is already there.

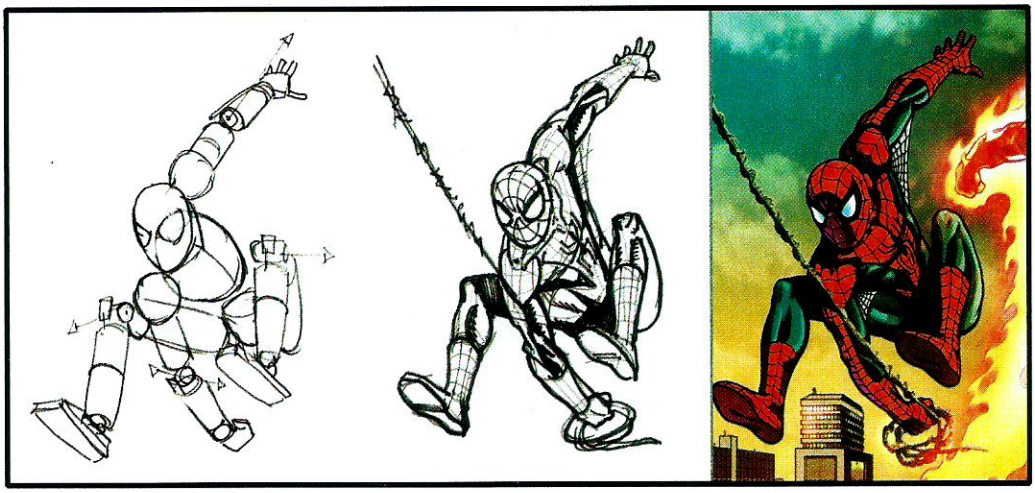


THREE-STEPPROGRAM

These are the actual construction drawing, pencil sketch and finished art for the splash page in *Spider-Man/Human Torch* #1. The drawing on the left, made from balls and tubes and boxes, was used to work out the rather strange position Spidey gets into when swinging around town. Notice how I "drew through" the arm and head to see the form behind it, even though it wouldn't be in the final drawing. It helps visualize the objects as solid.

Then I put the ball and tube drawing on a light table, and traced the figure onto new paper, adding the details of anatomy and light and shadow. Again, this step is made much easier by the fully 3-D figure already on the page.

From there the drawing is passed onto talented inkers and colorists to create the final art you see in published issues. (In this case, inked by Nelson and colored by Sotocolor's F. Serrano.)



GIVE IT A TRY YOURSELF. With this method of visualizing, moving figures in space becomes much easier than it looks. Have a ball with it! (Get it?)

Ty Templeton blocks out time (and figures) to work on all sorts of projects, such as DC's Batman Adventures *and Bongo Comics'* The Simpsons.

FIGURE CONSTRUCTION

BY JIM CALAFIORE

Methods of figure construction can be as specific to an artist as his style. It's a matter of finding a comfortable process that is also somewhat time efficient (especially when working on a monthly title). This is how I do it from scratch.

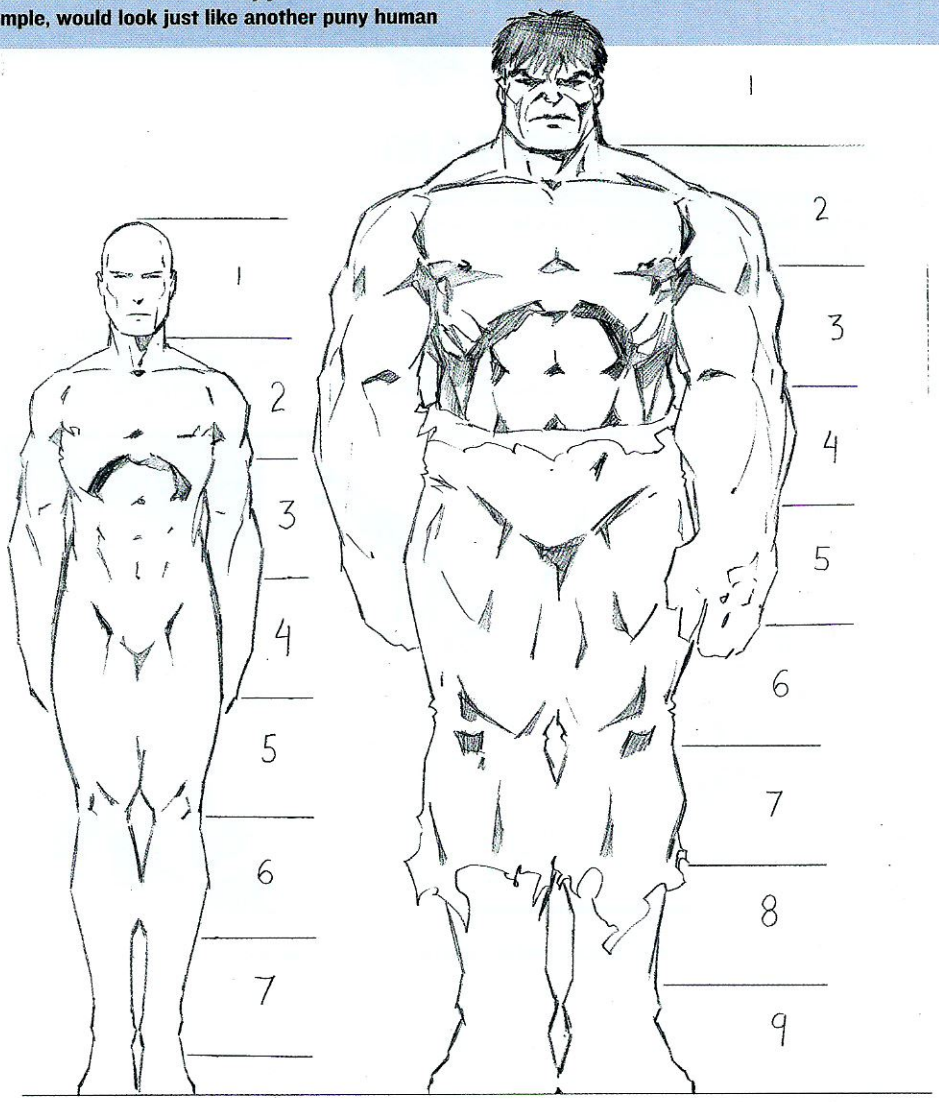
Before we begin: This is not an anatomy lesson. There's not enough room to even begin to explain that subject. I strongly recommend that you find some books on human anatomy and figure drawing. And if any schools or studios in your area offer life-drawing classes, sign up for them.

Why? Because we have to grasp the basics. We need to understand structure before we can distort it.

PROPORTIONAL RESPONSE

Using the height of a human head as a unit of measure, the average person is between seven and eight heads tall, give or take. But we're not drawing real people. We've all seen a wide variety of body proportions in comic books, depending on the artist; everything from realistically rendered to pin-headed behemoths. It's up to you to decide which approach works best for you, but there are times when reality just won't do. The Hulk, for example, would look just like another puny human in real-world proportions, no matter how bulging the muscles. It's the larger size of his body compared to his head that gives him his great bulk. (He should also be drawn larger overall, and I'll usually enlarge his hands and feet even more.) Thor just wouldn't look right if his shoulders weren't two times wider than they should be.

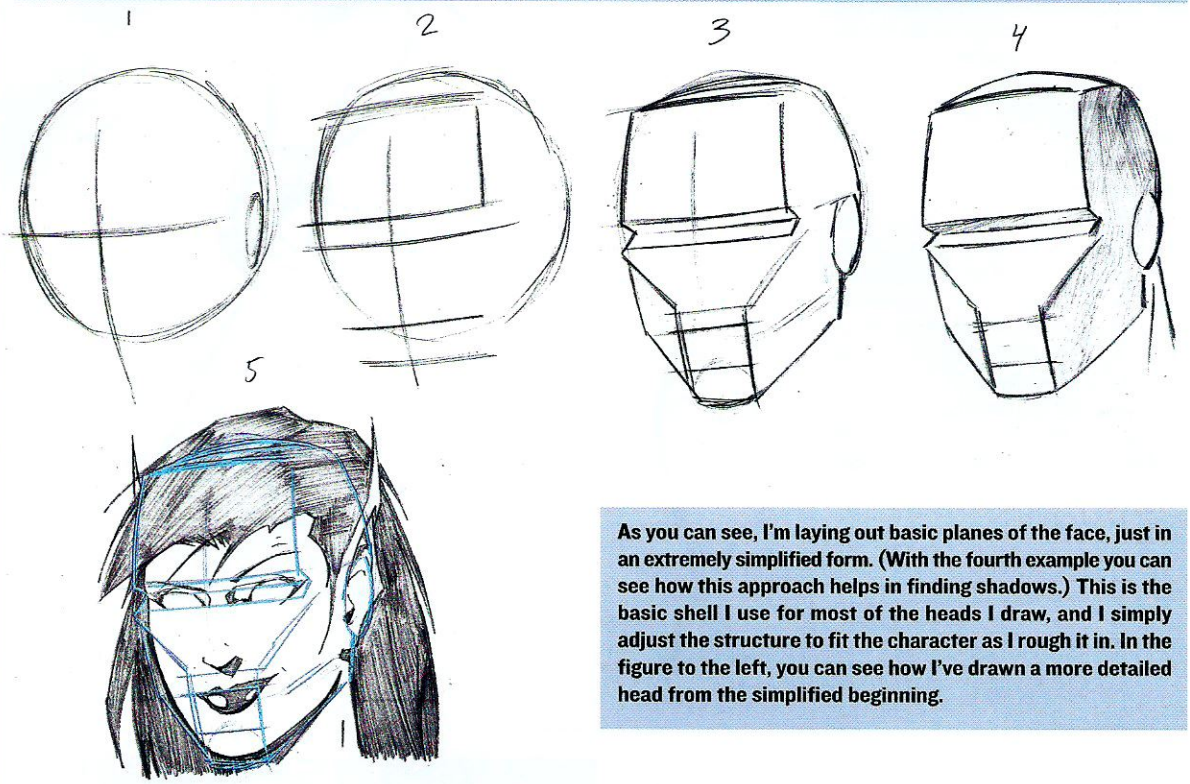
Varying proportions can help create character.



MARVEL, HULK, WOLVERINE ™ & © 2007 MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

BLOCKHEADS

When drawing a figure, I usually start with the head. I find it easier to "drop" the body off the neck than trying to position the head on an already sketched-out body. The diagram below shows four steps to how I handle basic head construction:



As you can see, I'm laying out basic planes of the face, just in an extremely simplified form. (With the fourth example you can see how this approach helps in finding shadows.) This is the basic shell I use for most of the heads I draw, and I simply adjust the structure to fit the character as I rough it in. In the figure to the left, you can see how I've drawn a more detailed head from the simplified beginning.

WITHATWIST

When first working out a particular pose, I start by drawing little stick figures. Unless a character is at complete, standing rest, I usually try to twist the body, even if only a little bit. Like a spring, it adds tension to a pose.

In **Figure A**, I've drawn horizontal lines through the head, shoulders and hips—the three major independent parts of the body. At standing rest, these lines are parallel. In the next figure, you can see the rotations of each line as I "twisted" the figure.

Be careful. You can only twist so far before it starts to look weird. One major part of the body can rarely turn perpendicular to the part above or below it. Try it. Turn just your head, and you'll see that your chin can't get all the way to your shoulder...at least not without severe pain and a trip to the chiropractor. The same is true for your torso and hips.

Sometimes I'll even draw the "twist" lines first just to see how the tension reads.

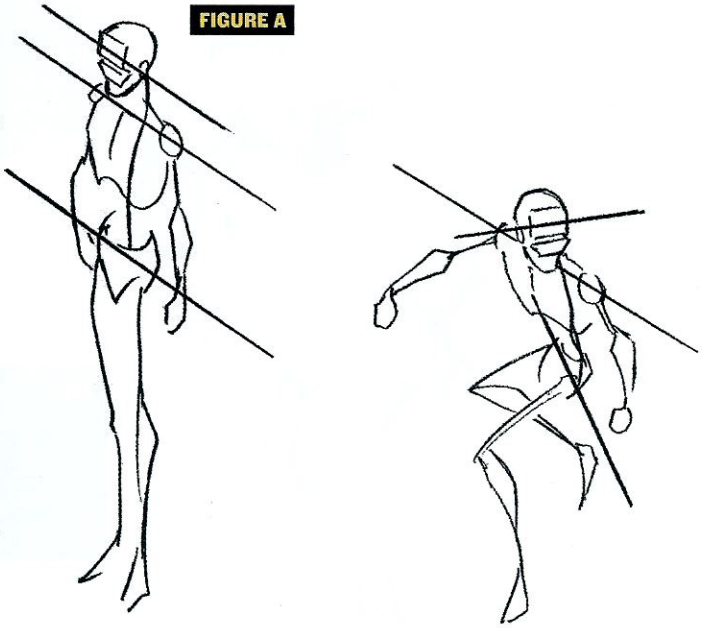


FIGURE A

BAREBONES

Moving to full size in **Figure B**, I seem to be starting over with another stick figure. This time, however, I'm working with the "sticks" of the human skeleton. (Well, just a few of them, and greatly simplified.) It helps to work out various lengths, and to visualize the joints.

You'll notice the heavy line indicating the spine. In this stage, I find it helpful to lay in the spine after the head; it helps keep things in line so I don't get the head, torso or hips way out of position. From the spine, I hang an oval rib cage and a rough pelvic shape. The limbs flow naturally from these.

Note that I've included the "twist" lines through the head, torso and pelvis to help orient the figure again.

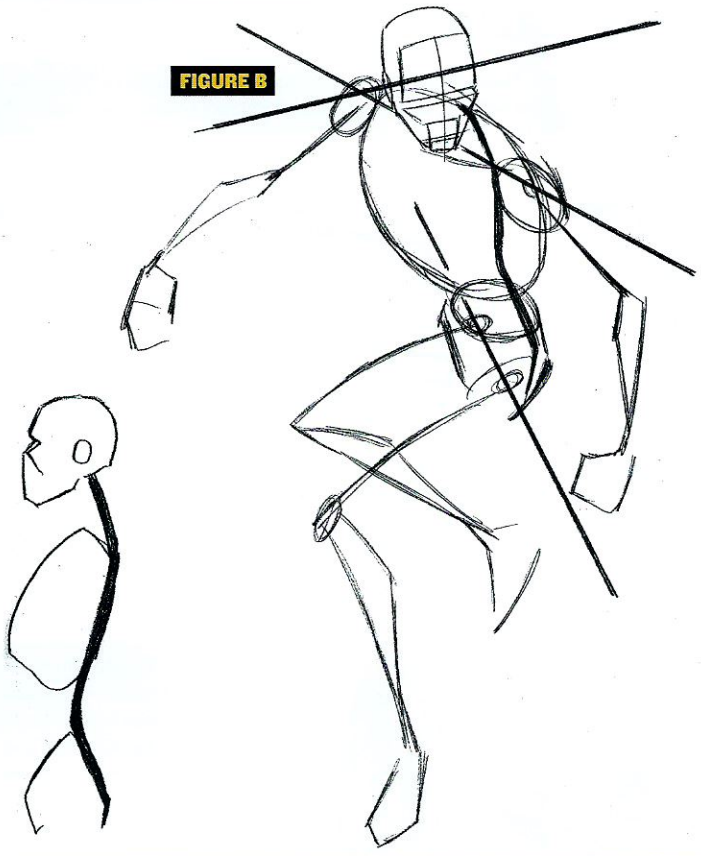
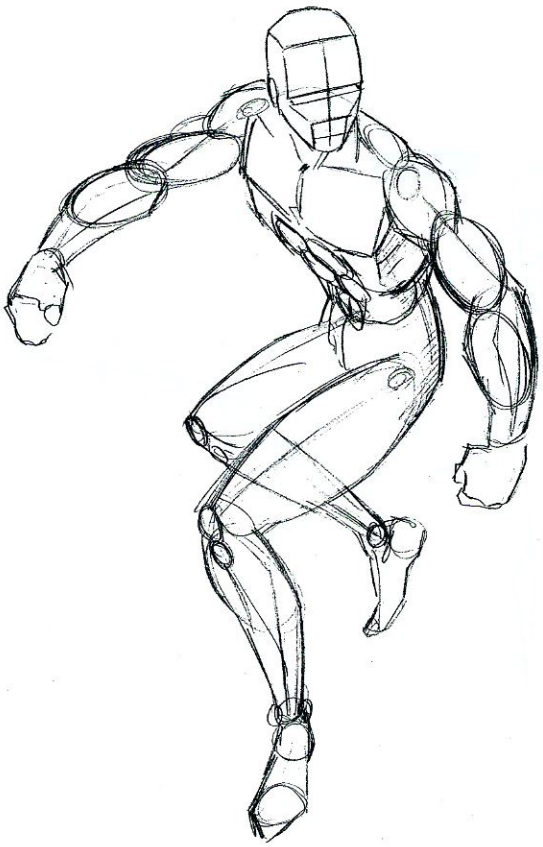


FIGURE B



ROUGHLYSPEAKING

In this figure, I rough in the basic body forms—chest, trunk, arms, legs, etc. I'm still not being too specific here, just trying to get the proportions right. I use simple ovals, tubes and blocks to build the figure. A knowledge of anatomy is helpful with the mass of the limbs and such. You'll also note that in some places, like the chest, I've started delineating specific planes like I did with the "block heads."

PRO TIPS

LIVE ACTION

"Draw from life, till you get used to it—windowpanes, doors, telephones, everything. If you can make the backgrounds convincing, the figures you draw will be more believable." —John Romita Sr., *Amazing Spider-Man*

PUMPITUP

Then I go back and put in specific muscle groups (**Figure C**). Again, I can't go into any extensive discussion of anatomy, so I'm suggesting you look at reference books. I find bodybuilder magazines very useful, since the muscles are so well delineated on the bodies, and the way they thread together is distinct. Muscles don't sit independent of each other; they intertwine, giving it that "corded" look.

Eventually you develop your own shorthand for rendering muscles.

FIGURE C





ANDTHEN...

Add the costume, and the miscellaneous hoo-ha, and we're done. Now you might say that the figure in the "Roughly Speaking" section didn't look like it was going to be Wolverine. It was too thin!

That's the point. The basics of figure construction work the same for an average person as they do for a muscle-bound shrimp with metal toothpicks stuck in his hands.

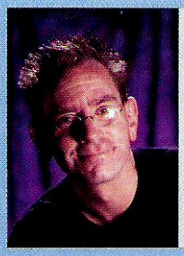
...He didn't hear me say that, did he?

Oh.

Um, gotta go. 'Bye.

BASIC PERSPECTIVE

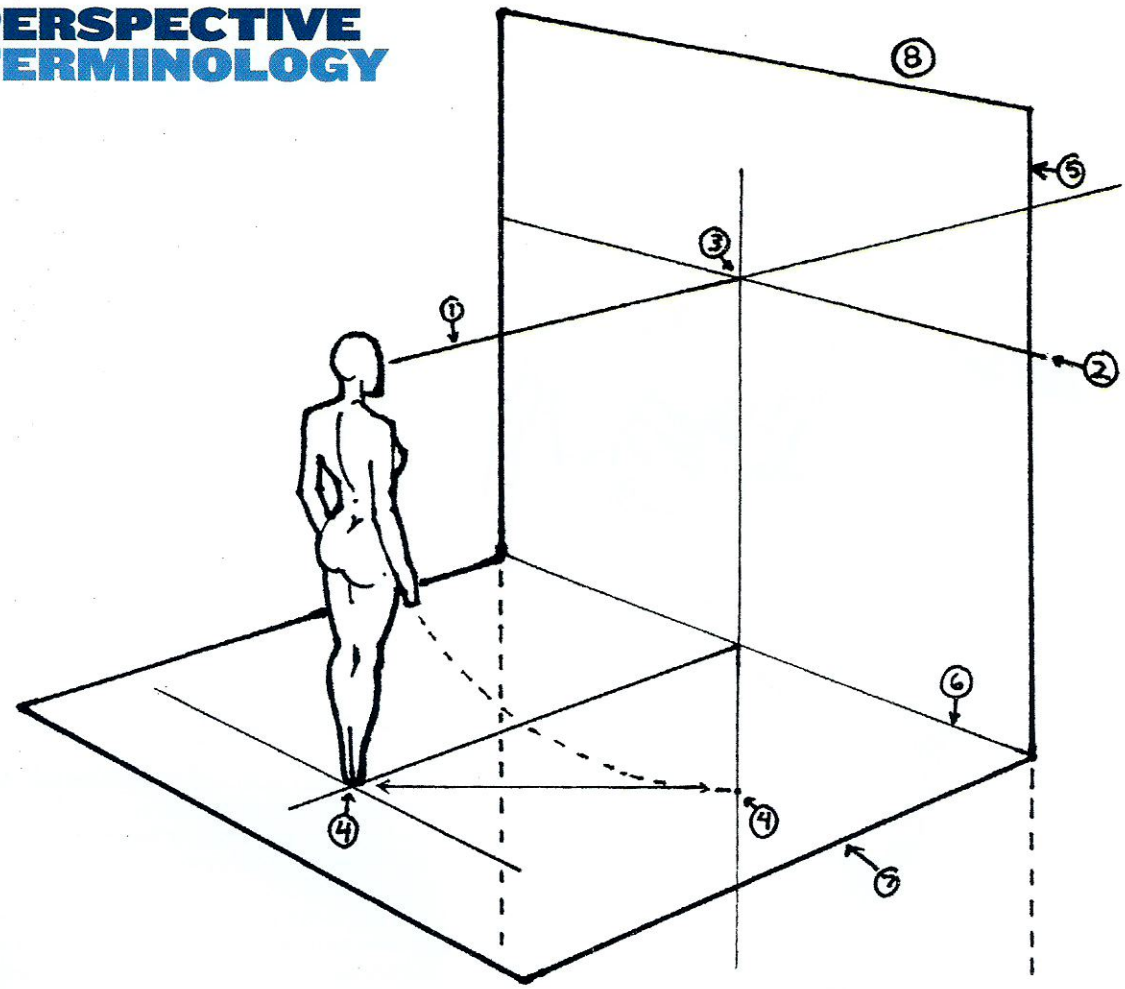
BY BART SEARS



Greetings and salutations! Much of what I know of perspective was gleaned from many sources at many different times in my life. One such source I've discovered is a book which I have found to be the best single source of perspective drawing: ***On the Spot Guides: Perspective Drawing*** by Mark Way (published in 1989 by Outline Press, London, England). Anything you want to know is in it, explained in relatively simple terms, clearly illustrated. It's a veritable treasure chest of perspective knowledge.

According to my ***Webster's Dictionary***, "perspective" is "1. The art of depicting objects on a plane so as to show three dimensions and indicate distance away from the observer; 2. Proportion, interrelation, scale; 3. Appearance in terms of distance." I don't think I could have said it better myself.

PERSPECTIVE TERMINOLOGY



1. **Line of sight:** An imaginary line traveling straight out from the viewer's eyes to infinity.
2. **Horizon line:** A line drawn horizontally across the picture plane at the point of intersection with the line of sight.
3. **Vanishing point:** The point at which receding parallel lines appear to converge at the horizon line.
4. **Standing point:** The point on the ground plane where the spectator is standing.
5. **Picture plane:** An imaginary vertical plane through which the spectator is viewing the scene. Each panel in a comic book would be considered to have been drawn on this imaginary plane.
6. **Ground line:** A horizontal line drawn to represent the intersection of the picture plane and the ground plane.
7. **Ground plane:** The horizontal plane on which the viewer is standing; does not have to be the ground plane of the picture.
8. **One-point perspective:** The simplest form of drawn perspective (diagram above) in that all receding parallel lines converge at only one vanishing point.

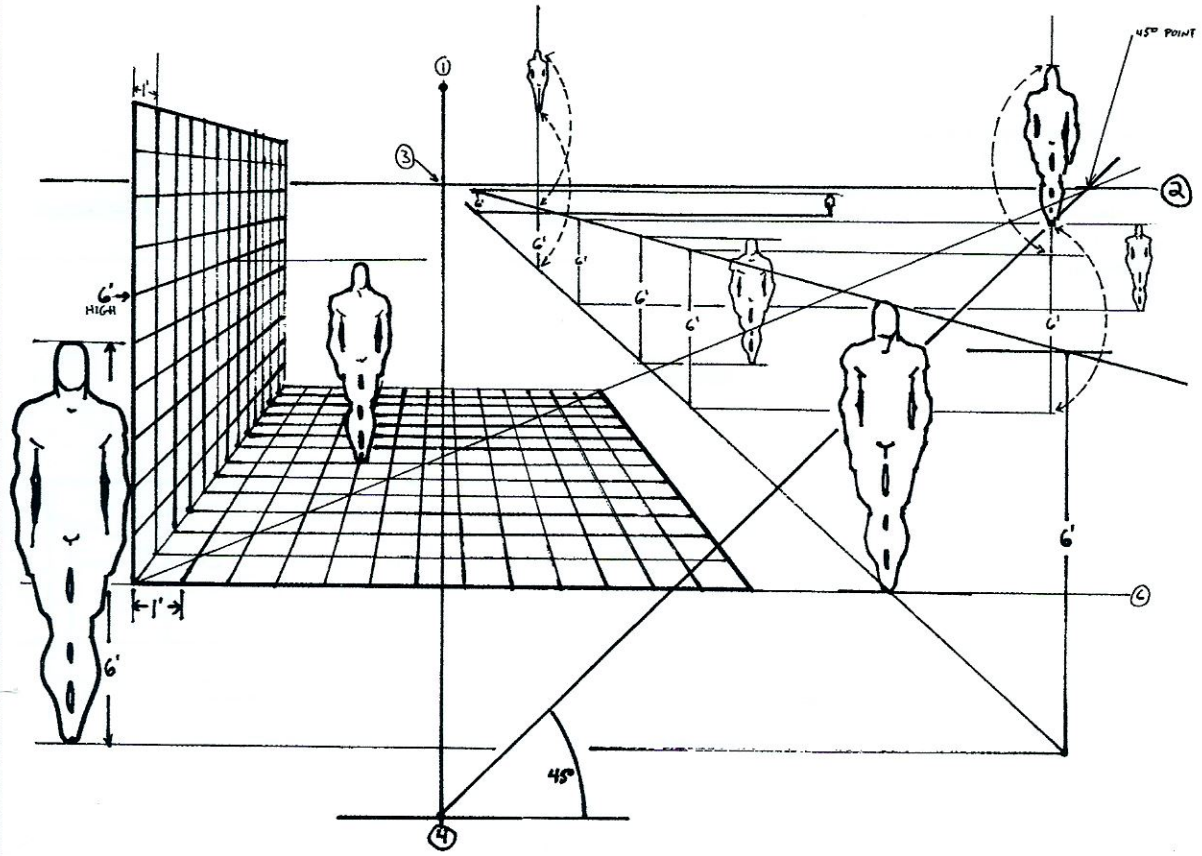
PHOTO: PAUL SCHIRALDI

CONVERGENCE AND FORESHORTENING

The principle of convergence states that when objects with parallel sides are seen in perspective, parallel lines receding from the viewer appear to meet at the horizon line (no convergence).

These receding lines are known as vanishing lines, and the point at which they converge is known as the vanishing point.

When objects of equal size recede into the distance, they appear to get smaller the farther they are from the viewer. This is known as foreshortening. When the amount of perspective is slight, the foreshortening is gradual and barely noticed; when the perspective is severe, the foreshortening is dramatic and powerful.



ONE-POINT PERSPECTIVE

I've constructed a one-point perspective grid above. Note how the standing point from the previous page translated to an actual drawing. Notice the 15-degree line drawn from the standing point to the horizon line and pay attention to how this vanishing point was used to help construct the floor and wall grids. Note also how the series of six-foot tall figures were determined by locating balance points and following the vanishing lines from the top of the head to the vertical lines drawn up through the balance points. There is a lot going on here and not much space to teach it. Study it and figure it out the best that you can.

PRO TIPS

STYLE GUIDE

"Overly stylized art might make you an interesting fad, but you run the risk of becoming yesterday's news and losing out on a long-term future in comics." —Ethan Van Sciver, *Green Lantern*

THERE YOU HAVE our first real look at perspective, a real bare-bones kind of look as well. I know that a lot of this might not make a whole lot of sense to start, but keep trying and keep drawing. There's just so much to drawing, and this is really a pretty small forum, but hang in there and, eventually, we'll get it all covered.

Bart Sears, artist on comics like Marvel's Sabretooth *and DC's* Justice League Europe, *thinks you should have a unique perspective on life, then draw it.*

ADVANCED PERSPECTIVE

BY JIM CALAFIORE

Jim Calafiore here again. I've often stated in tutorials like these that my techniques aren't the only way to go, but this one's a bit different. When it comes to accurately representing foreshortened objects and creating the illusion of depth, you must know perspective.

Having said that, I'll also say that there's no way I can possibly cover all the subtleties of perspective...even in this lesson or the next one, "Using Perspective," on page 28. As with any technique you're interested in, I suggest looking for a book on the subject at a store or your local library. Now let's get to it!

THEVANISHER

We'll start with one-point perspective (**Figures A & B**). Yep, it's exactly what it sounds like: perspective lines originate from a single point, called a vanishing point, which sits on what's called the horizon line. If an object is oriented to a plane—such as the Earth—then that line is the actual horizon. But it doesn't have to be. This line can also be called the eye line. Whichever you call it, the line runs parallel to the camera.

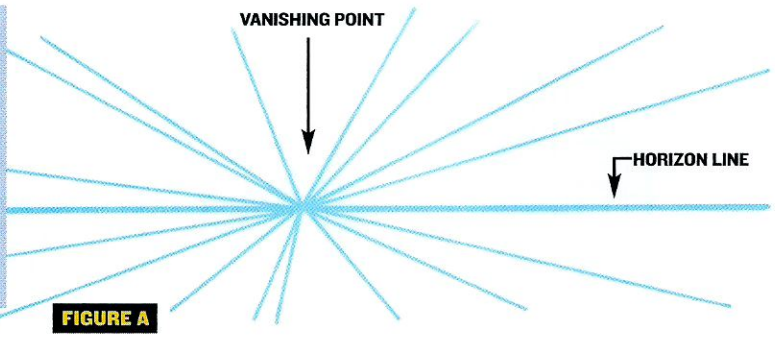


FIGURE A

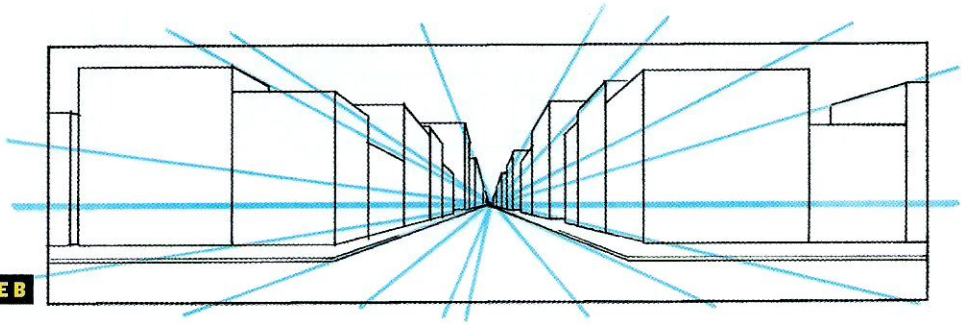


FIGURE B

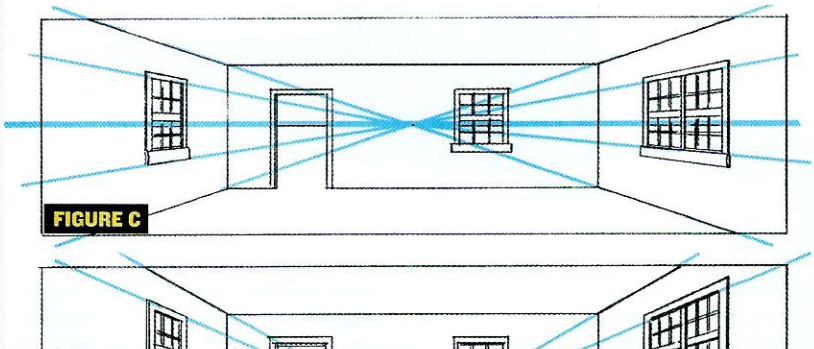


FIGURE C

CHILD'SPLAY

One-point perspective deals with the foreshortening of one dimension. In **Figure C**, the depth of the room is oriented to the vanishing point. The other two dimensions, height and width, remain parallel to the camera plane.

Perspective can be manipulated to change the feel and mood of the room by altering the camera angle. In **Figure D**, we've lowered the camera

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PRACTICALPERSPECTIVE

Finally, here's a practical application, as Spidey swings high above the city. A high-angle view of the Web-slinger as he does his thing always adds a ton of drama and scope. Often with three-point perspective, as seen here, all vanishing points fall outside the image area. (Of course, I could've just traced the background from an aerial photo of the city...but where's the fun in that?)

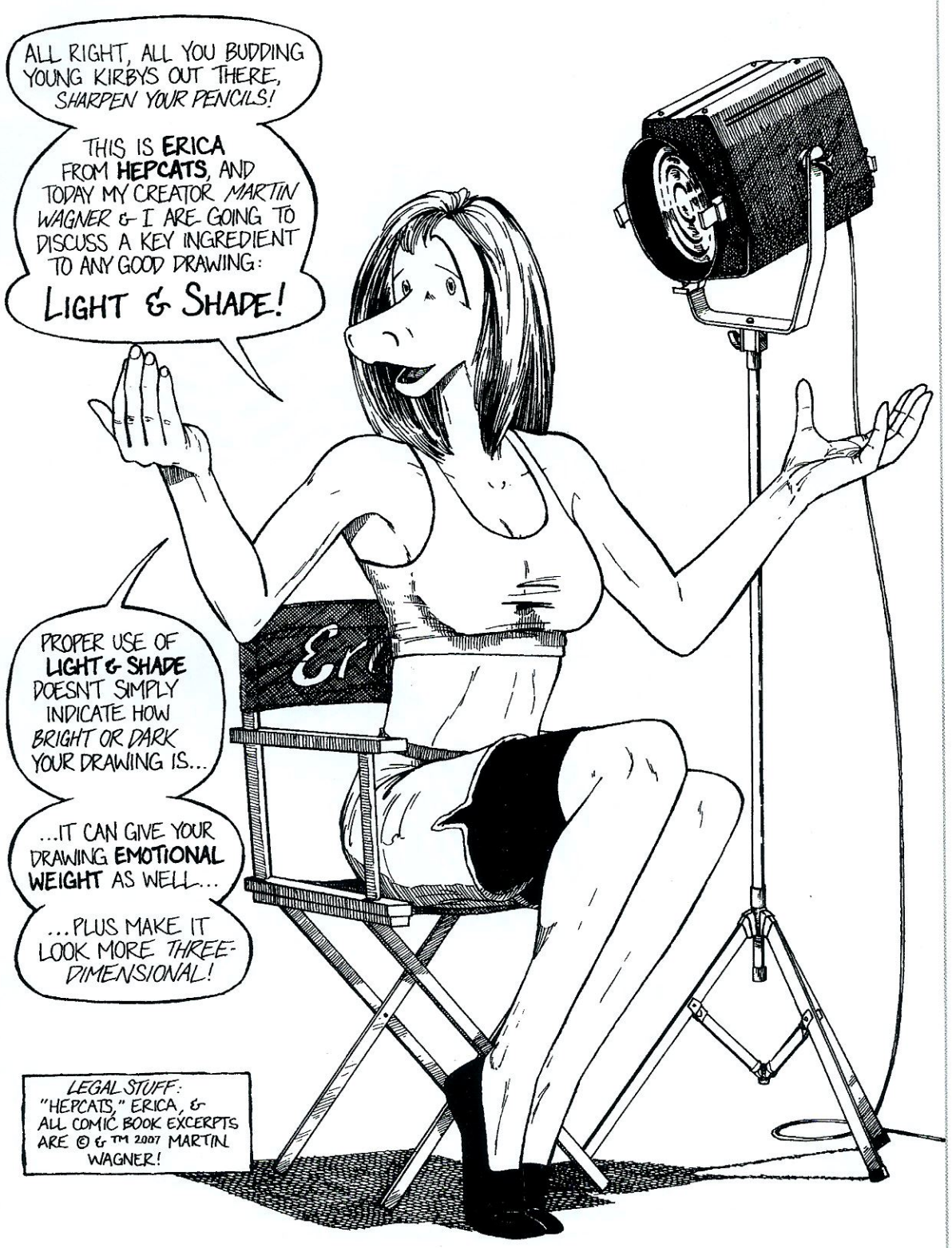
Hey, here's a trade tip for ya. At larger bookstores, you can find books of preprinted perspective grids over which you can use tracing paper, or you can slide the grids under your actual pages if you're using a light box. Although these grids won't help you know when, where and how to use perspective, you won't have to physically rule the lines out each time.



THREE-POINT PERSPECTIVE is where we end. Unless you're Picasso, there's no such thing as four-point perspective. Now, I know all this may seem a bit confusing and daunting, but take it slow. None of this is too hard. Just keep things in perspective. (Sorry, I couldn't resist.) Now get out of here and get to work. Thanks for reading.

SHADING

BY MARTIN WAGNER



MARTIN SEZ:
ERICA'S RIGHT, GANG!

BASICALLY, WHEN YOU DO A DRAWING, THERE ARE *TWO* TYPES OF LIGHTING THAT WILL AFFECT HOW YOU SHADE...

① SOURCE (or KEY) **LIGHTING:**

THIS IS OBVIOUSLY *WHERE* THE LIGHT IS COMING FROM. IT COULD BE THE SUN, A LAMP, WHATEVER.

② AMBIENT (or BOUNCED) **LIGHTING:**

THIS IS LIGHT THAT IS REFLECTED OFF WALLS OR OTHER OBJECTS IN THE PANEL AND BOUNCED BACK ONTO THE SUBJECT OF THE DRAWING. ... *Now...*

THE LESS STUFF THERE IS TO BOUNCE LIGHT...

...AND THE HARSHER AND BRIGHTER THE LIGHT IS... *THE DARKER THE SHADING.*

EXAMPLES: (*these are kinda general, still...*)

I
- GUY IN DESERT, NOTHING AROUND FOR MILES
- BLINDING SUNLIGHT
- **VERY DARK SHADOW**

II
- GUY IN FULLY FURNISHED BEDROOM
- LIGHT FROM CEILING & TABLE LAMP

Whole lotta bouncin' goin' on!

- **LITTLE TO NO SHADING**

SO ANYWAY...!

HOW TO SHADE...AN OVERVIEW:

YOU CAN DO HAND-SHADING, SUCH AS **CROSS-HATCHING**, THOUGH IT TAKES PRACTICE AND ONLY REALLY LOOKS GOOD WITH A CROWQUILL PEN. (*kind of a pain, too*)

YOU CAN CUT SHADING **FILM** or **TONE.** SOMETIMES YOU HEAR THIS STUFF CALLED "ZIP-A-TONE." ACTUALLY, THEY'VE GONE OUT OF BUSINESS. I USE FORMATT.™

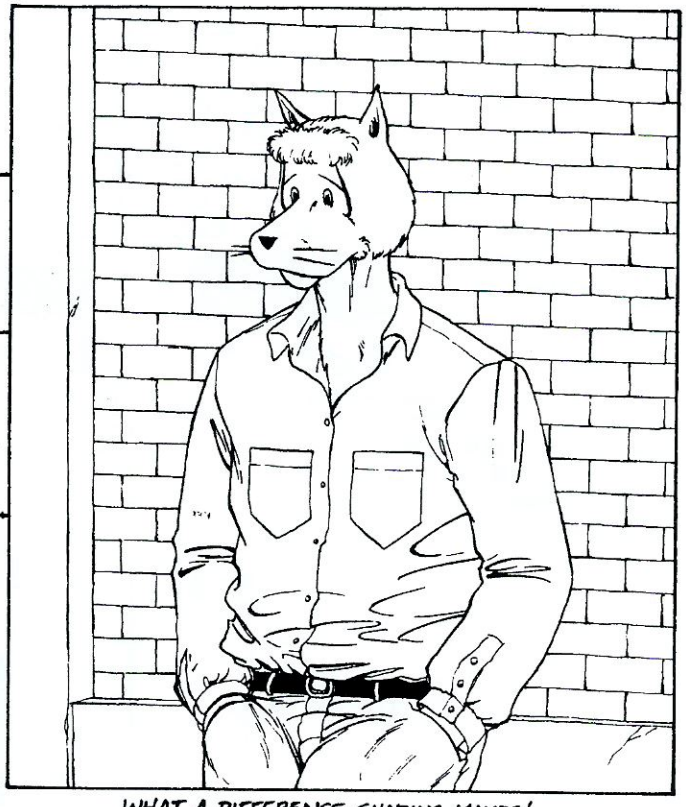
Note: LAY OFF THIS STUFF IF YOU'RE DOING A COLOR COMIC!

OR, SOME COMICS TODAY LIKE *LUFTWAFFE 1946* USE SOFTWARE LIKE **ADOBE PHOTOSHOP**™ TO DO THEIR SHADING.

EXPERIMENT WITH LOTS OF TECHNIQUES & FIND WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU!

"OKAY, WELL, THIS IS COOL AND EVERYTHING, BUT HOW DO I **DO** IT?"

★ FEAR NOT, WIZ-KIDS. OVER THE NEXT TWO PAGES, ERICA'S GONNA WALK YOU THROUGH IT, STEP-BY-STEP!

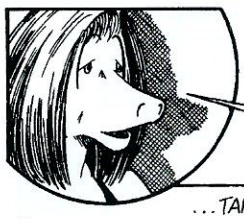


WHAT A DIFFERENCE SHADING MAKES!

HERE'S A DRAWING OF THAT CHICK-MAGNET **JOEY**, WITH NO LIGHT & SHADE. DULL, FLAT, A BIG YAWN.

AHH, MUCH BETTER. LOTS OF DEPTH AND MUCH MORE 3-D. SOURCE LIGHT SHINES DOWN FROM UPPER RIGHT; AMBIENT LIGHT BOUNCES UP FROM LOWER LEFT!





HOW TO SHADE BY HAND

OKAY, WE'RE JUST GOING TO PRACTICE ON A SIMPLE OBJECT, LIKE A **CUBE**. SO, GRAB YOUR PENS, AND...

...TAKE A LOOK AT THE DIFFERENT LAYERS OF CROSS-HATCHING YOU CAN DO.

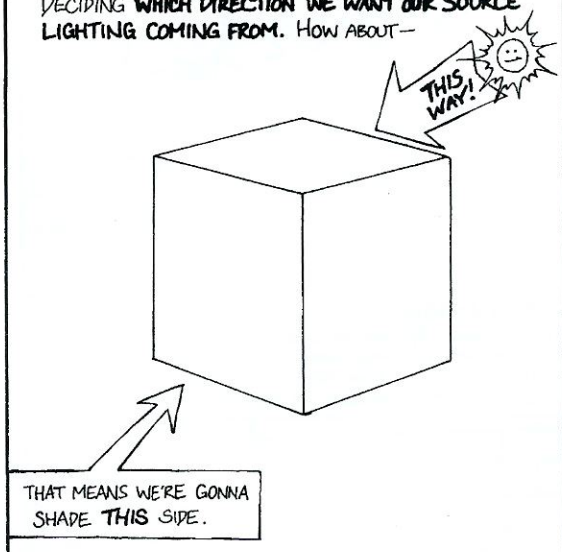
CROSS-HATCHING IS MADE BY DRAWING ROWS OF LINES AT 90-DEGREE* ANGLES TO EACH OTHER!!!



*WELL, IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE EXACTLY 90 DEGREES, BUT YOU GET THE IDEA. ANYTHING OVER 4 LINES MIGHT AS WELL BE SOLID BLACK.

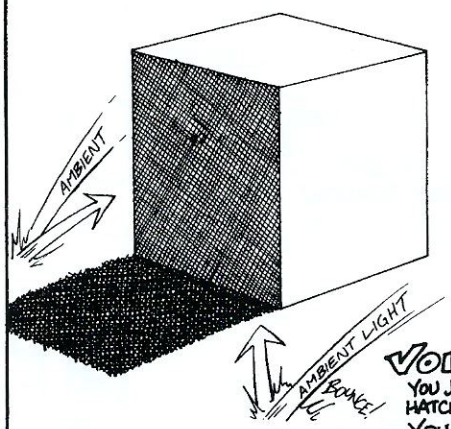
OKAY, HERE'S OUR CUBE!

YEP, THAT'S A CUBE, ALL RIGHT. SO LET'S START BY DECIDING **WHICH DIRECTION WE WANT OUR SOURCE LIGHTING COMING FROM.** HOW ABOUT—



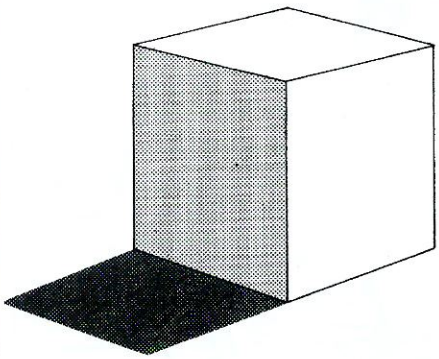
NOW, WE WANT THE SHADING ON THE CUBE TO BE A LITTLE BIT **LIGHTER** THAN THE SHADOW ON THE GROUND. WHY?? BECAUSE OF ALL THAT BOUNCING AMBIENT LIGHT, REMEMBER? SO:

- **2-LINE** CROSS-HATCHING ON THE **CUBE!**
- **4-LINE** CROSS-HATCHING ON THE **GROUND!**



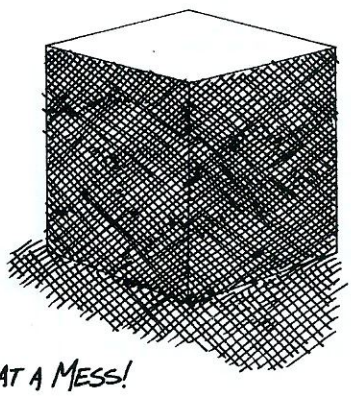
VOILÀ! YOU JUST CROSS-HATCHED A CUBE! YOU ROCK!!

NOW IT'S THE SAME APPROACH WHEN YOU CUT **SHADING FILM.** (WE'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO CUT IT ON THE NEXT PAGE.) SEE? WE USED SLIGHTLY LIGHTER TONE ON THE CUBE ITSELF. EASY.



THIS IS WRONG! WHY?

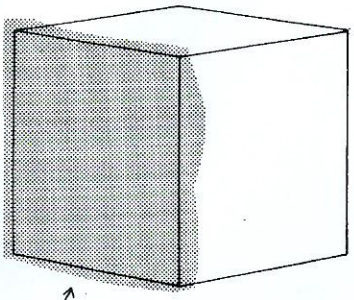
1) LINES ARE THE SAME BOTH ON THE CUBE AND THE GROUND. THE DRAWING LOOKS FLAT.
2) SHAPE OF THE SHADOW DOESN'T MATCH THE CUBE SHAPE. SO WHERE'S THE LIGHT SOURCE COMING FROM?

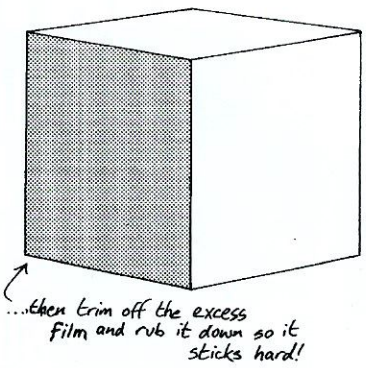


WHAT A MESS!

How to Cut Shading Film...

THIS STUFF IS PRETTY EASY TO USE (BUT IT HAS SOME DRAWBACKS).



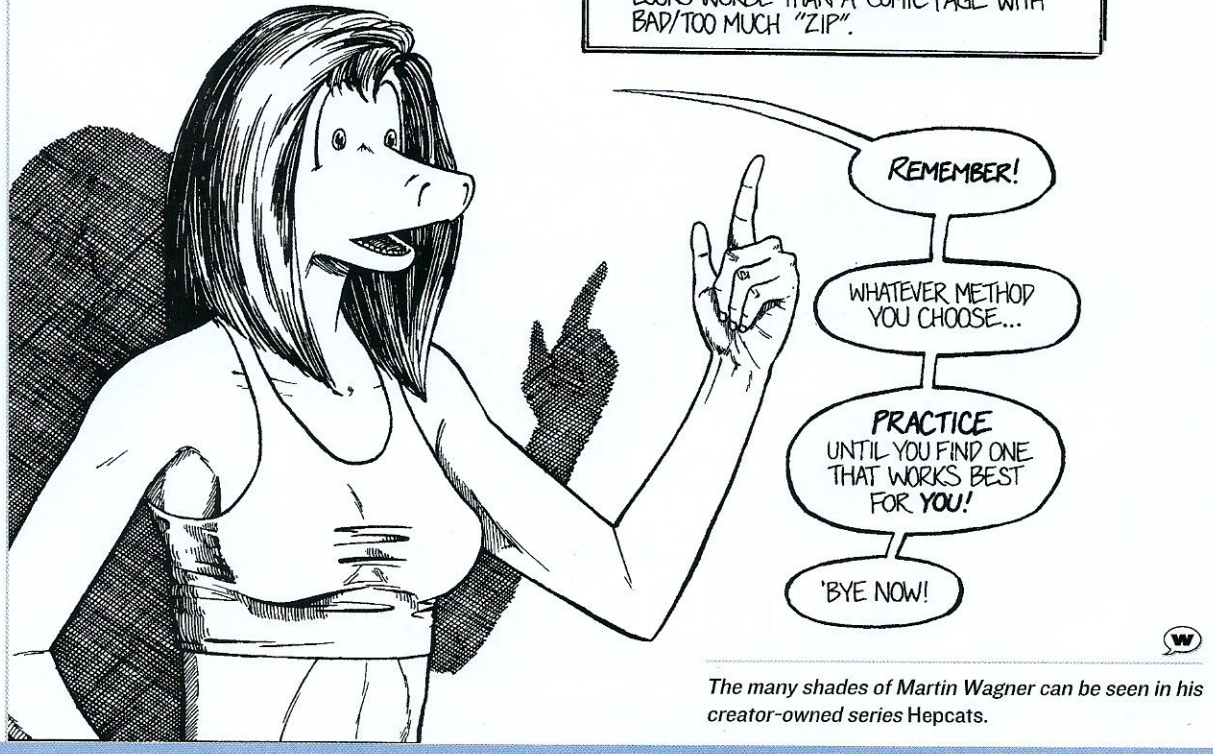


1. MEASURE THE AMOUNT OF FILM YOU WILL NEED. (HINT: IF YOU HAVE A LIGHT TABLE OR LIGHT BOX, IT'S A LOT EASIER.) USING AN X-ACTO™ KNIFE, CAREFULLY CUT THE FILM, LIFT IT FROM ITS BACKING, AND STICK IT OVER THE PART OF THE DRAWING YOU WANT TO SHADE.

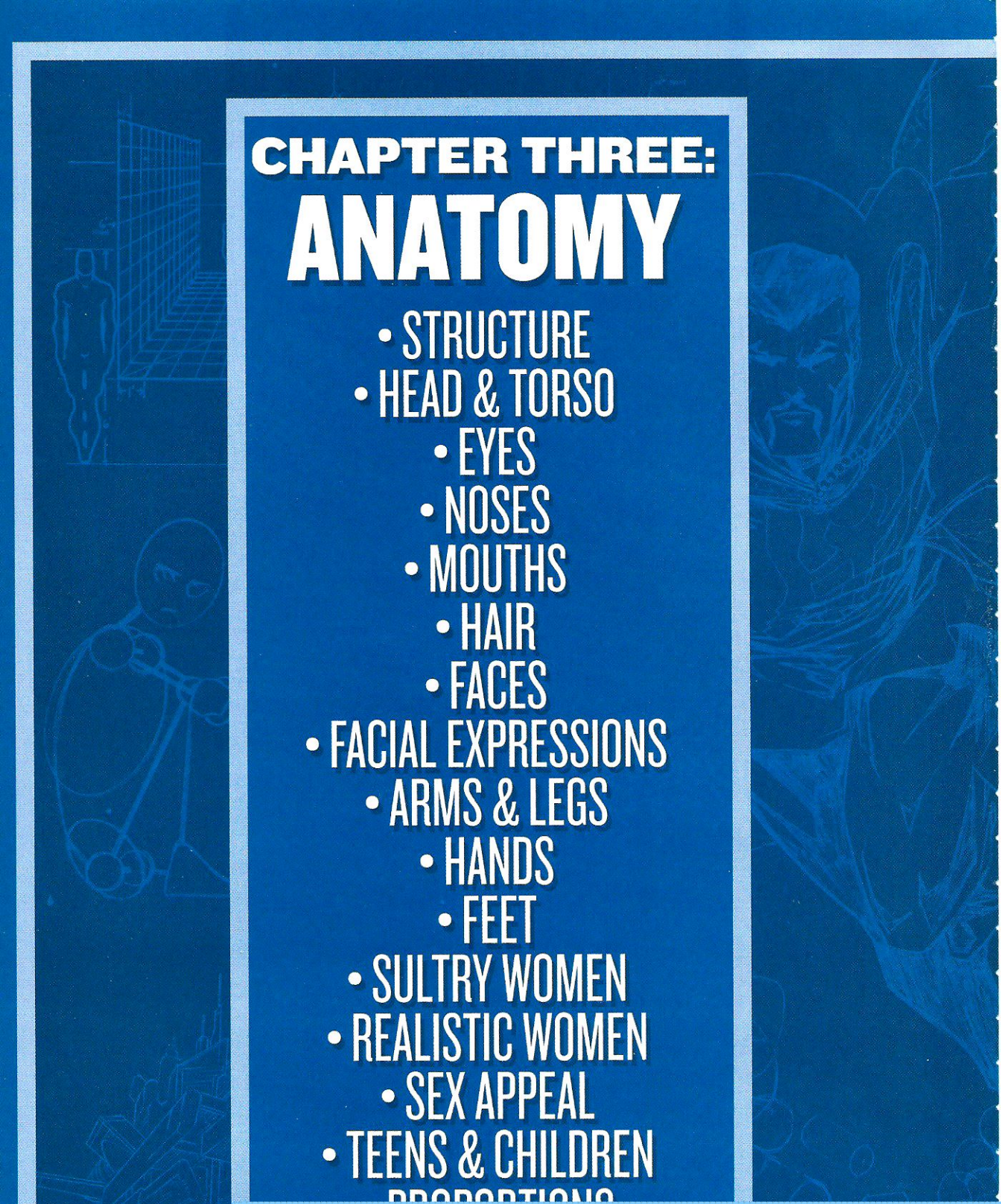
2. TAKE YOUR X-ACTO KNIFE AND TRIM OFF THE EXCESS FILM.

DRAWBACKS TO USING FILM:

- **IT'S EXPENSIVE!** ANYWHERE FROM $5 TO $10 PER SHEET!!
- LOTS OF ART SUPPLY SHOPS DON'T STOCK IT ANYMORE. ☹
- YOU SHOULDN'T USE IT UNTIL YOU'VE GOTTEN THE HANG OF HAND-SHADING. NOTHING LOOKS WORSE THAN A COMIC PAGE WITH BAD/TOO MUCH "ZIP".



The many shades of Martin Wagner can be seen in his creator-owned series Hepcats.

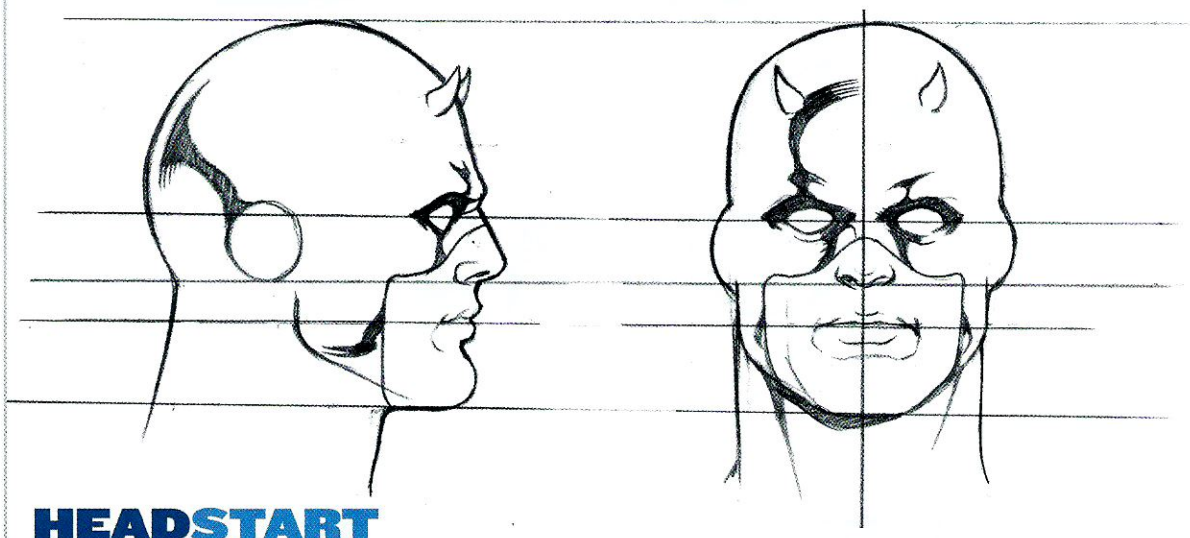

CHAPTER THREE:
ANATOMY
• STRUCTURE
• HEAD & TORSO
• EYES
• NOSES
• MOUTHS
• HAIR
• FACES
• FACIAL EXPRESSIONS
• ARMS & LEGS
• HANDS
• FEET
• SULTRY WOMEN
• REALISTIC WOMEN
• SEX APPEAL
• TEENS & CHILDREN

HEAD & TORSO

BY KEVIN MAGUIRE

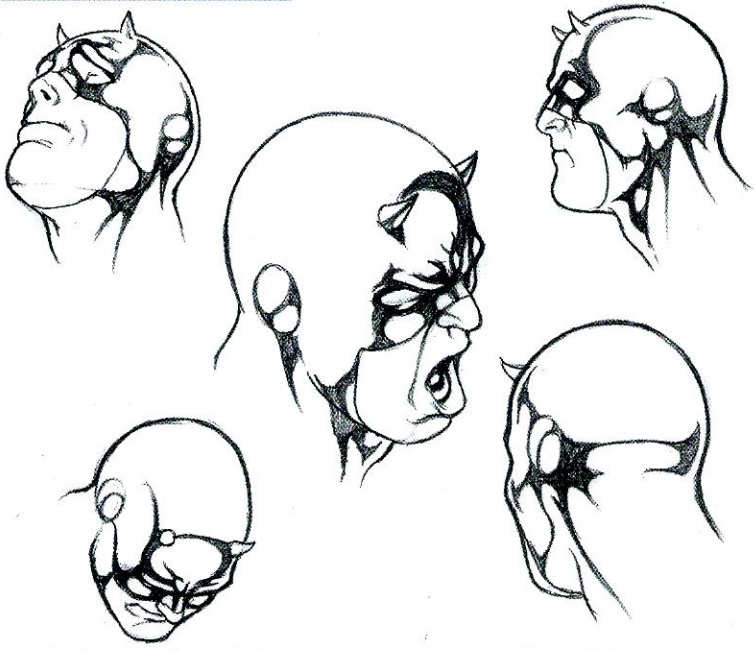
Welcome, eager pupils, to the next chapter in your journey to be better comic book artists. In this lesson, we'll focus on the head and torso.

As discussed in the previous chapter, I like to scribble my figures as opposed to using the block method. By building off a basic torso, we can work toward a completed form. Before we get there, however, let's take it one part at a time.



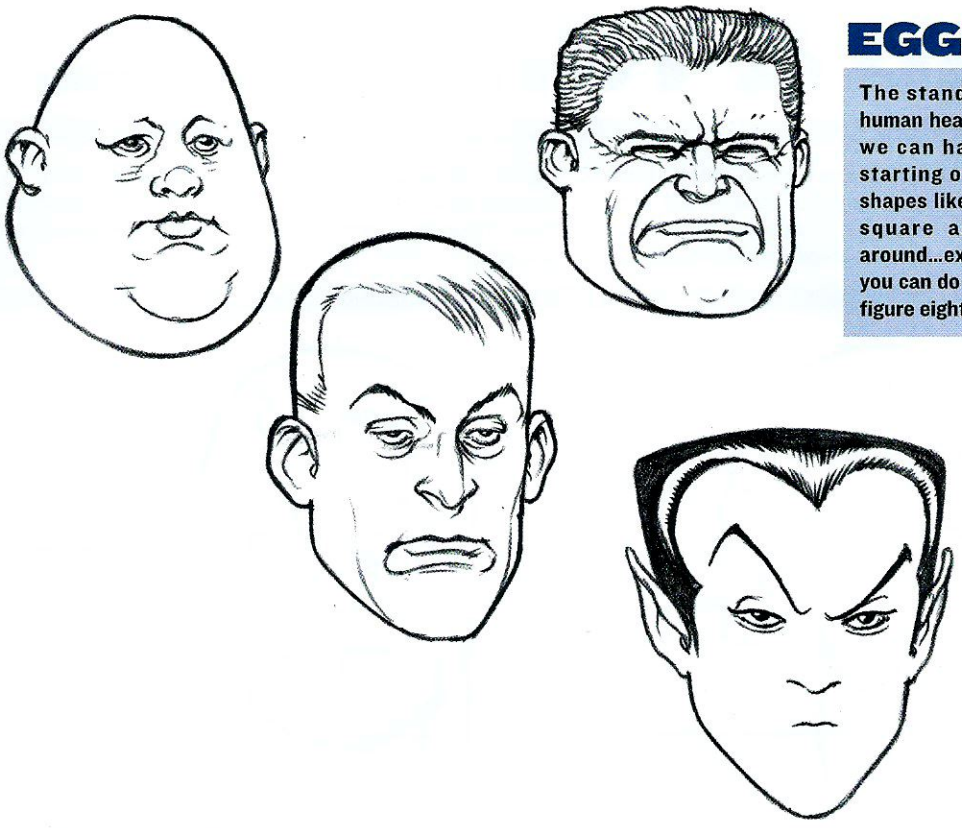
HEADSTART

Let's start with the head, a Hornhead in this instance. As illustrated above, you can see where the basic features line up in proportion with each other. Eyes in the middle, nose a little lower down and mouth below that. But I'm sure you didn't need to read an instructional to know that. Keep in mind that the shape of the head and its features are different with everyone or we'd all look exactly the same (if we're all lucky, like Brad Pitt).



Now that you have a sense of the human head, become familiar with it, not only in the humdrum lineup position, but from a variety of angles: bird's eye view, worm's eye view, three-quarter angle...you're eventually going to have to do them at all angles. Not only that, they're not always going to be glowering with their mouths clamped shut. If you're doing your job, the characters will be alive. They will be expressive, which naturally changes the shape of the head somewhat. Be open to these changes.

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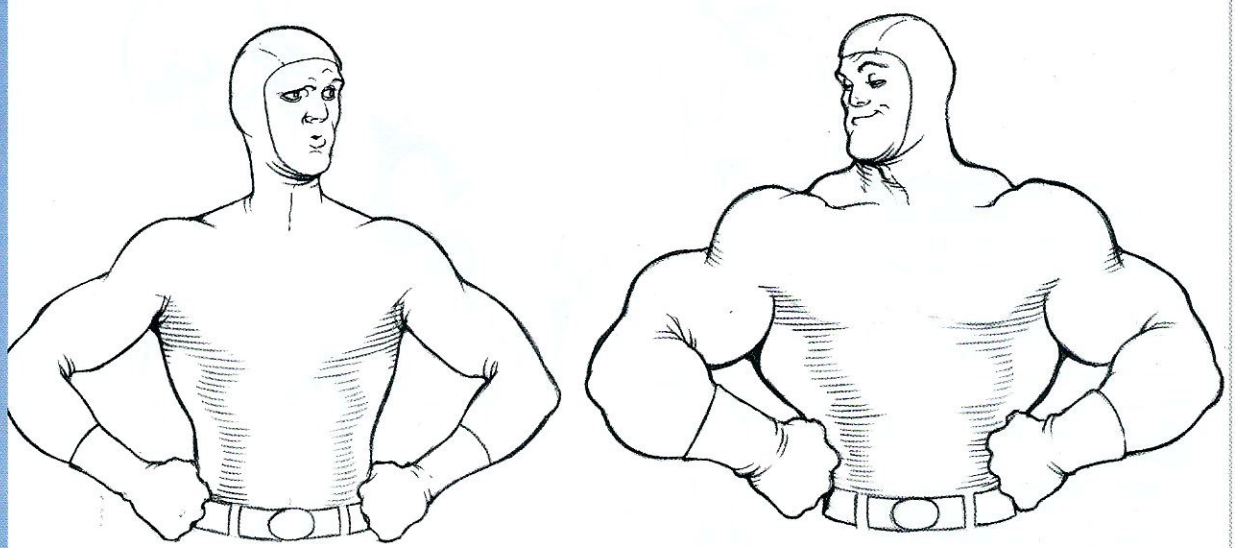


EGGHEADS

The standard shape for the human head is an egg/oval. But we can have a bit of fun by starting off with other basic shapes like a circle, rectangle, square and triangle. Play around...experiment...see what you can do with an octagon or a figure eight!

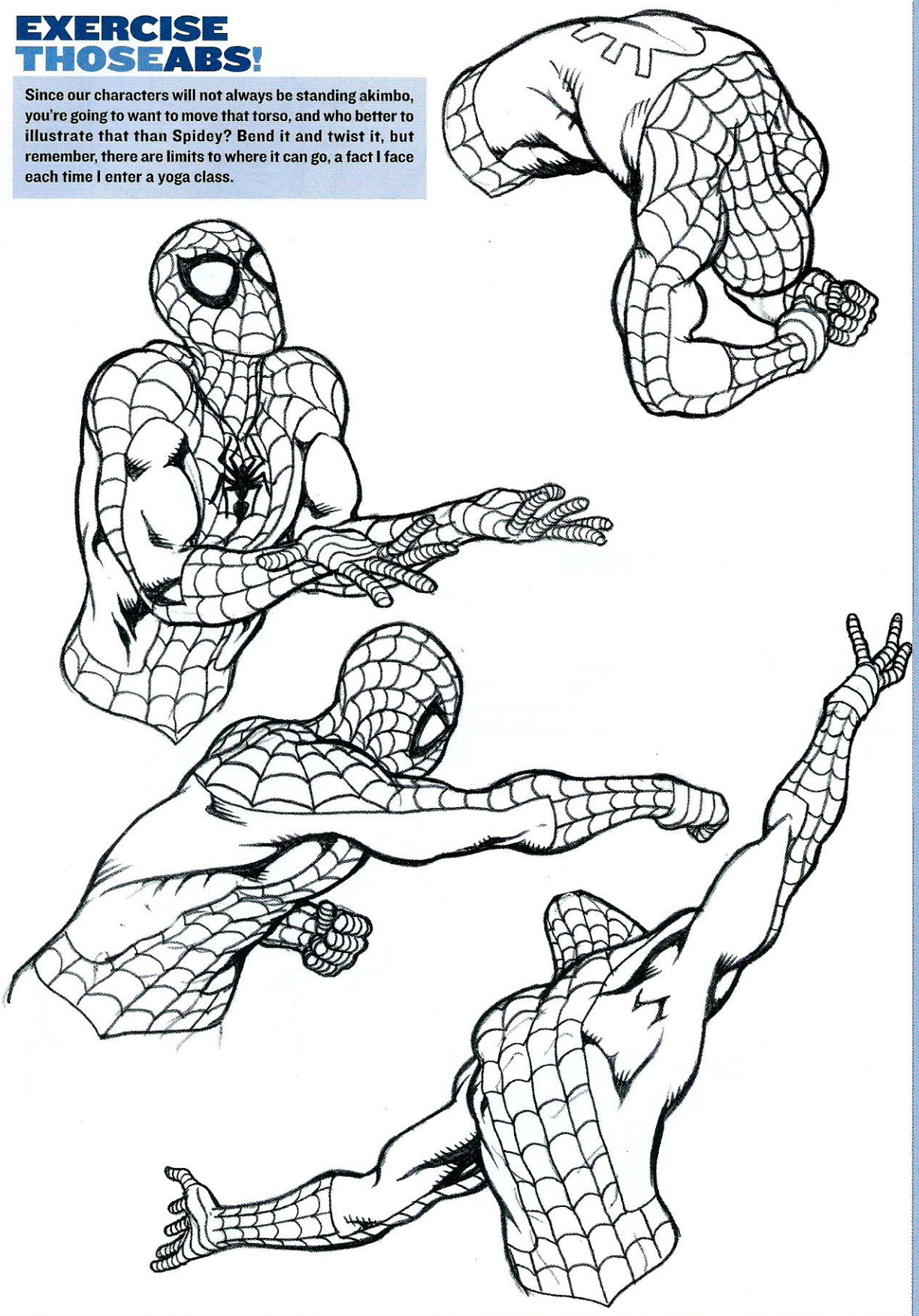
SUPERSIZEIT!

What's the difference between a normal guy and a superhero? Let's say we're having superhero auditions and these two guys show up. The first guy, well, he's in decent shape. He seems to work out. Probably keeps his cholesterol down. But, if you're being roughed up by a cadre of hooligans, you're going to want candidate No. 2 swooping in to your rescue. It's the size. While I'm a big proponent of varying body types, for your *super*heroes (and -villains), make 'em big!



EXERCISE THOSEABS!

Since our characters will not always be standing akimbo, you're going to want to move that torso, and who better to illustrate that than Spidey? Bend it and twist it, but remember, there are limits to where it can go, a fact I face each time I enter a yoga class.

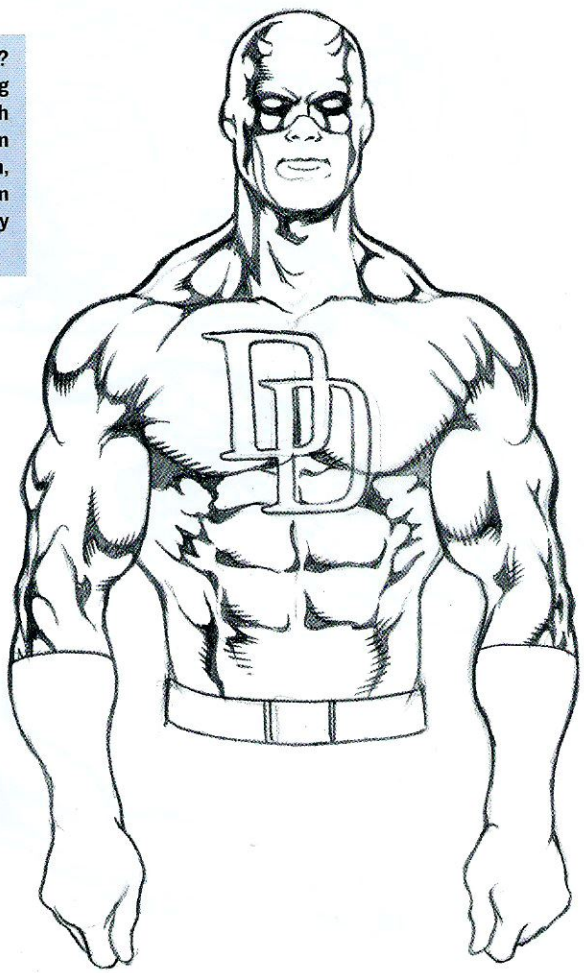






SEXEDUCATION

What are the differences between the male and female torso? Well, luckily, we have Shanna the She-Devil and Ka-Zar emerging from a refreshing swim to illustrate the differences for us. With women, I go for the classic hourglass shape, whereas the men look more heroic with a "V" shape to their torsos. With women, I tend to make the lines softer. I don't put a lot of definition on them. The simpler, the better. For the men, hard and cut. I try to see as much musculature as I can.



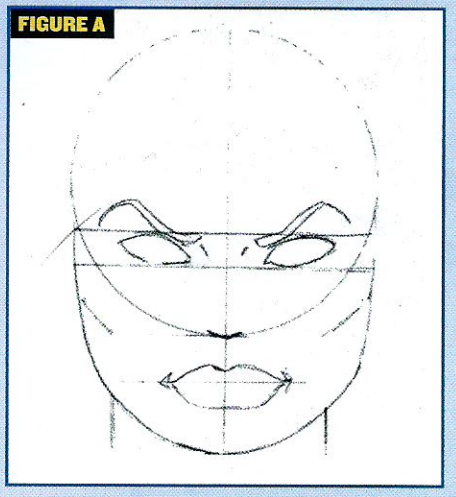
HIGHDEFINITION

When you've got all of these elements worked out, you move on to your finished torso. As discussed in the previous lessons, become familiar with anatomy. Know the difference between the abs and the pecs, the lats and the delts, as well as their proportion with each other and...voilà! You can draw your own Daredevil!

HEADS UP

Now that your studies of anatomy have placed you head and shoulders above other aspiring artists, it's time to move full speed ahead. Wrap your brain around the tips Kevin Maguire just gave you and listen to what some other artists have to say when they exercise their noggins.

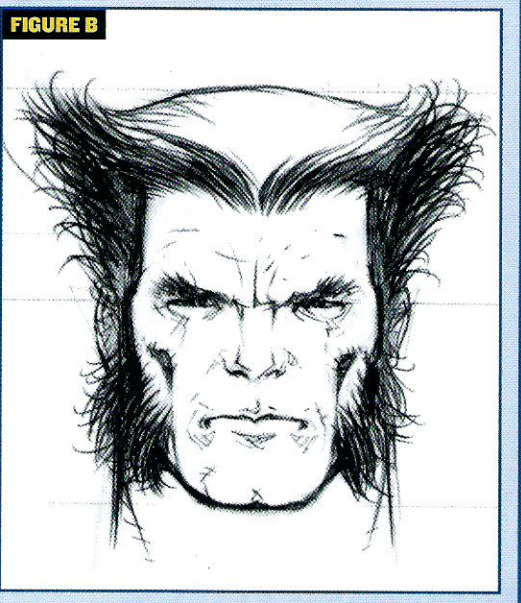
FIGURE A



JIM BALENT ON THE BASICS

"The head should be about five eyes wide, and if you were to draw a vertical line from a corner of the mouth, it'd intersect the eye right through its center [**Figure A**]. This little trick will help you keep your mouth centered beneath the nose. Cheekbone lines (if you want to show 'em) should rest on the nose line and arch upward in a parallel fashion to the inner circle."

FIGURE B



LEINIL YU ON DISTINCT FEATURES

"[In **Figure B**, a character like] Wolverine's head is wider than other characters', so don't use the same template you would use to draw Spider-Man. He's also not the typical good-looking guy. I recommend aging him a bit—I picture him in his 40s. He's the most experienced X-Man, and it should show. His facial template is wider and more vertically compressed than others. Some facial features you might observe include a shorter nose bridge, thick eyebrows, a square jaw and some wrinkles here and there. Also, notice that his neck is drawn straight down like a trapezoid or triangle to suggest stability and firmness."

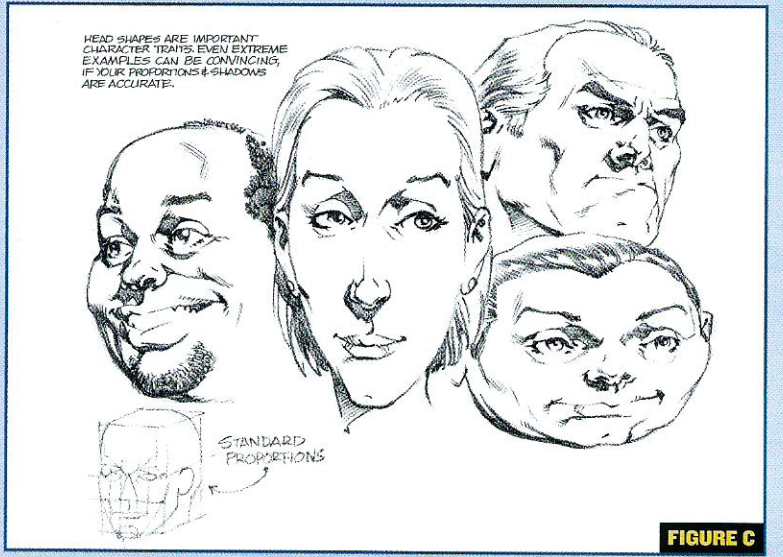
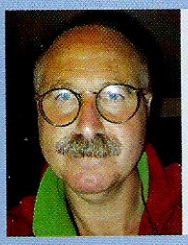


FIGURE C

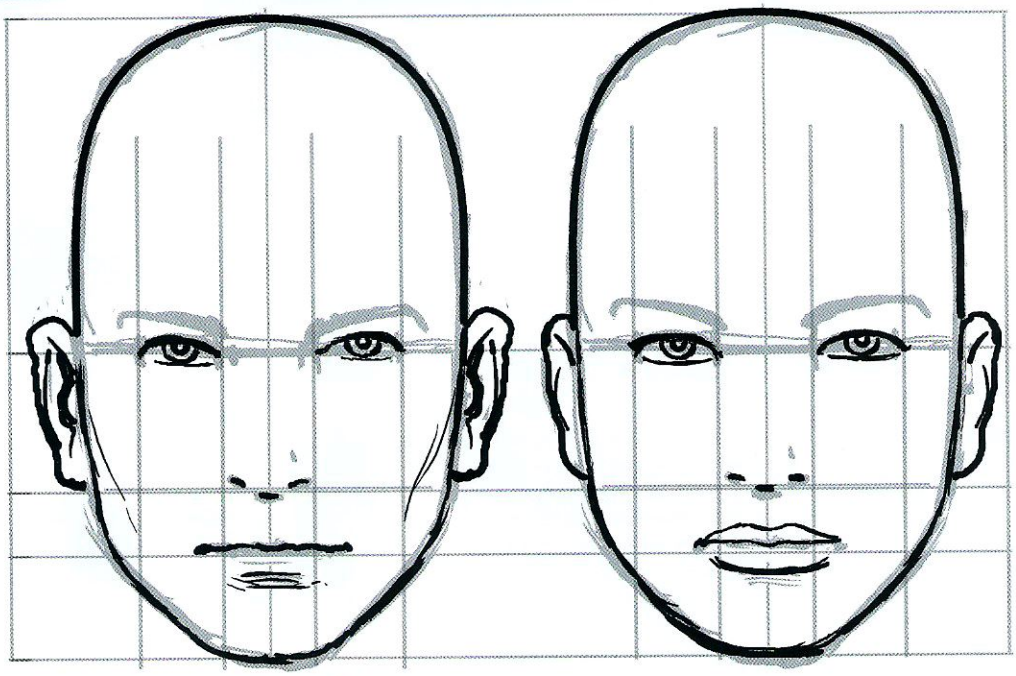
RAGS MORALES ON HEAD SHAPES

"Head shapes are important character traits. Even extreme examples can be convincing, if your proportions and shadows are accurate. I've used movie and TV stars, friends and family, or even people I've seen from the mall [**Figure C**]. Remember not to use the exact face of someone, though, just the type that fits the personality...lawsuits, y'know."

EYES BY BRIAN BOLLAND



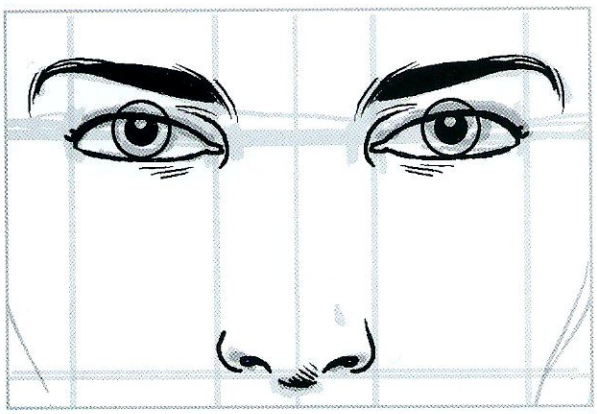
As I sit here preparing a tutorial on how to draw, I realize I don't really know how to draw. At the beginning of each day I'm convinced I can't draw, and my first attempts just serve to confirm my worst fears. I just get by on a combination of observation and a vast vocabulary of tricks learnt from other, better artists. There is no "right" way to draw eyes, noses, mouths, etc. What you draw has to be based on what the thing looks like in real life, but artists in comics have come up with shorthand versions of eyes, mouths, etc., which often look better than the real thing. It's my belief that if you reduce drawing to a set of formulae, you end up with formulaic drawing. Keep looking, keep trying new ways and don't believe for a moment that you've got it completely right.



PROPORTIONS

First the basics. From this drawing above, you can see the relative proportions of the eyes, nose, mouth and ears. The eyes are roughly halfway down the whole face. Divide the lower half again and you have the tip of the nose. Divide that again and you have the spot for the mouth. The eyes should have the width of an eye between them.

I should mention here at the beginning that I'm doing all of these sketches in Photoshop on a computer. They're not "computer generated." Everything is drawn with a pen on a Wacom tablet. However, if you're trying this out for yourself at home, I would strongly suggest you do it with a real pencil on real paper.



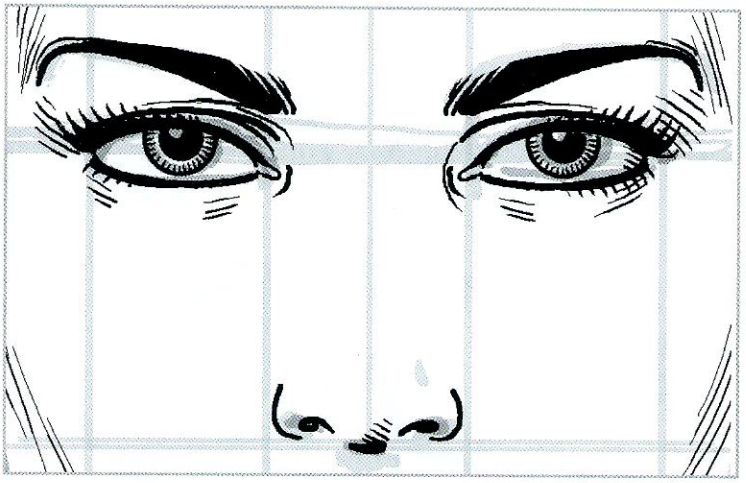
EYELIDS

In normal circumstances the upper eyelid sits just on top of the pupil of the eye. This changes during emotional states such as surprise.

When drawing the eyes themselves, try to get the pupils and the irises—the dark bits—in the right place. Fiddle around with them till you get it right. You'll know when you have. Whatever I draw there's usually one human figure that's a key element in the composition—the focus of your interest in the situation—and your eyes will go straight to their eyes. I always start inking a comic book cover by inking that face, and I always ink one of the eyes first. If you can get those eyes right, and that face, then the rest of the page will look okay.

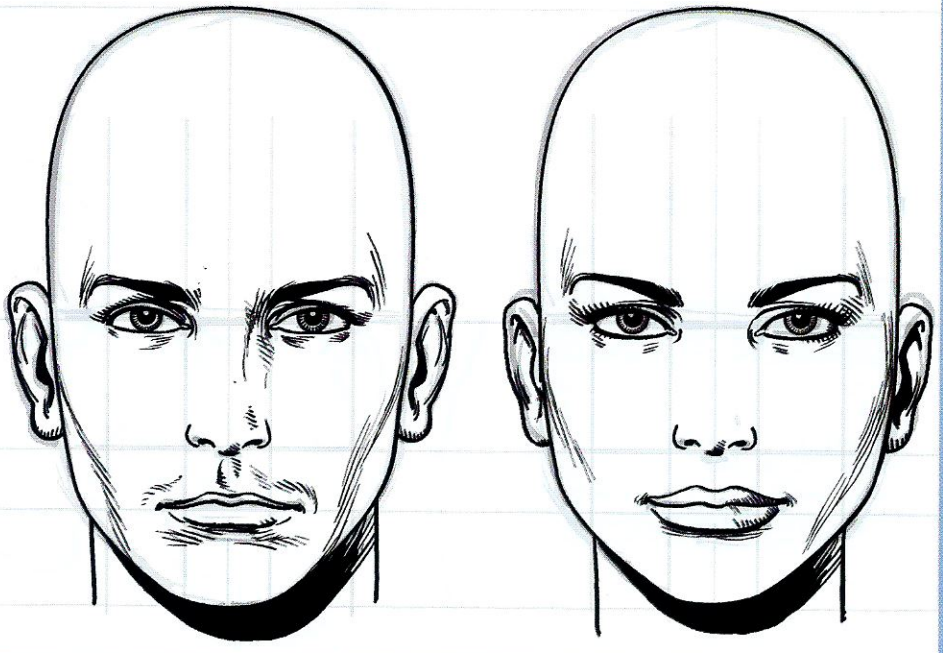
FEMALE FACE

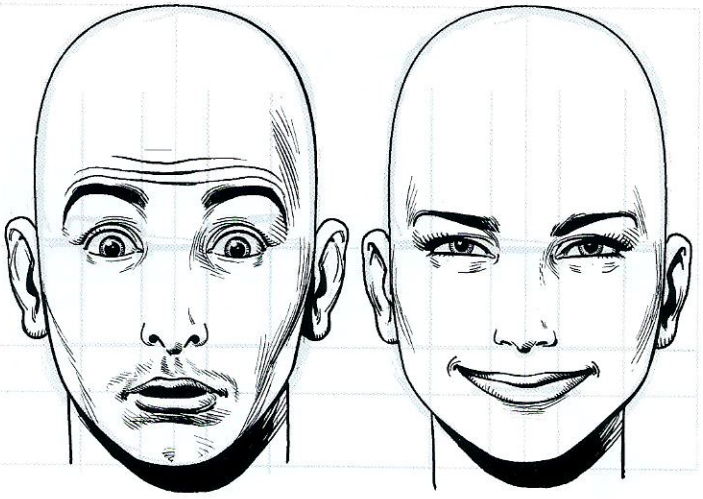
Slightly different principles apply to the female face. We assume automatically in the world of comics (unless otherwise instructed) that she's young and beautiful and wearing false eyelashes. Emphasizing the eyes in this way makes it easier to show them from a distance when you're having to draw a small figure.



BILL AND JILL

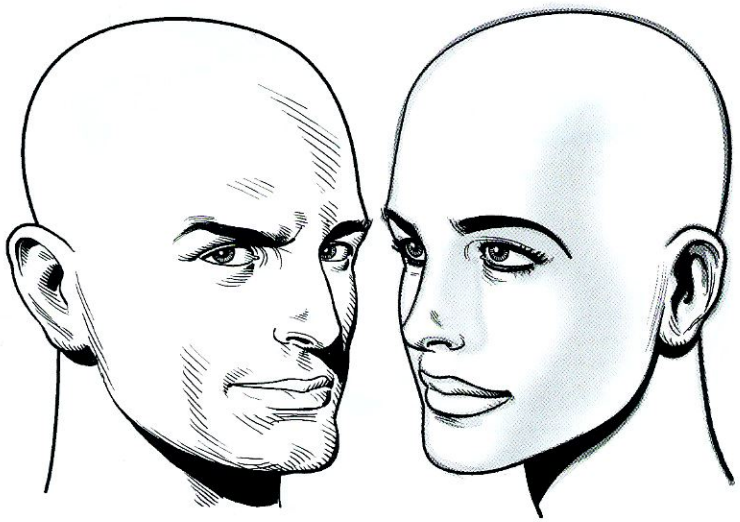
Our two faces—let's call them Bill and Jill—should have their eyes placed on their faces somewhere like this. I never could draw ears! Fortunately, Jill will eventually have long hair, and when it comes to Bill, well, I'll just have to take a proper look at some ears sometime!





SURPRISE AND SMILES

While we're still looking at Bill and Jill's faces from the front, there's a variety of moods that can be expressed with the eyes. The look of surprise or fright on Bill's face requires the white of the eyes to be visible between the iris and the upper eyelid, and the eyebrows to be raised. A proper smile requires the lower lid to rise up and even, as in Jill's case, become a slightly upward-curving line. I include the nose, mouth and whole head here because, well, the eyes, nose and mouth are connected by muscles and together make up the expressions. I'll see if I can give Bill a better mouth when I get to that particular lesson.



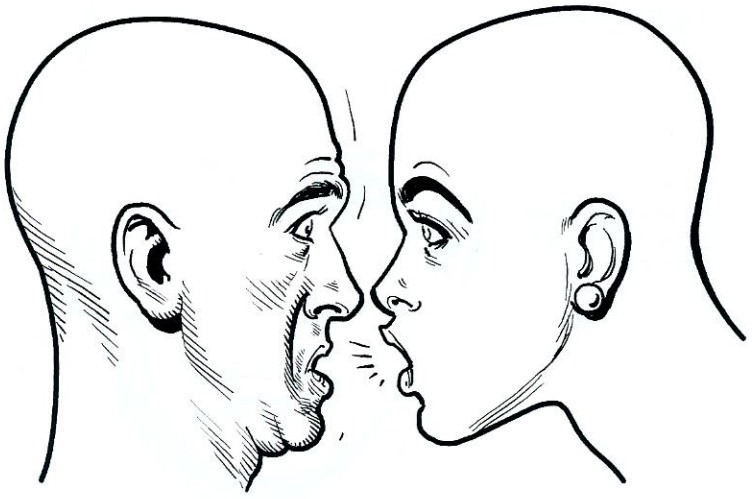
TURNING THE HEAD

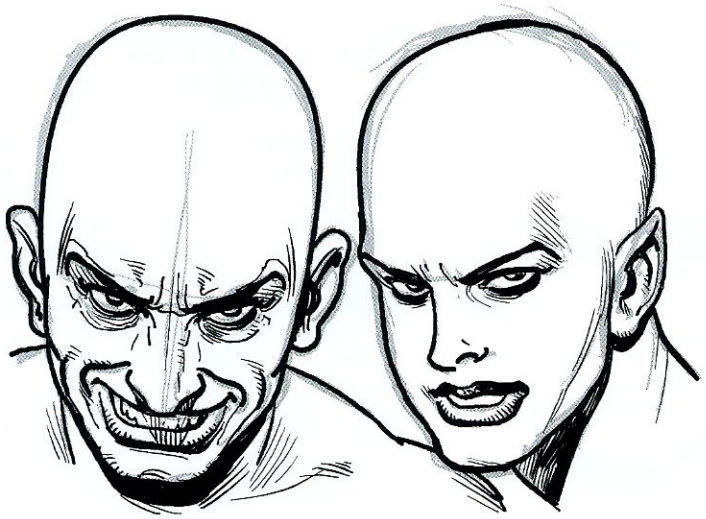
Right, let's turn the heads around slightly. I've always had a mirror propped in front of me as I draw so I could copy my facial characteristics and expressions. As I get older I'm more comfortable drawing old guys with droopy faces, and I see from this drawing of Bill that the bit of skin above the upper eyelid is quite heavy. I'll have to watch that.

What can I say about this? This is the way I do it. Often I find I just can't get a face right and go flying to a folder of photo references. So far I haven't gone there. Jill has been drawn here in a more stylized way. Often a face like this will end up no more than an inch high on the actual comics page, so it has to be rendered in fewer lines.

SIDE VIEW

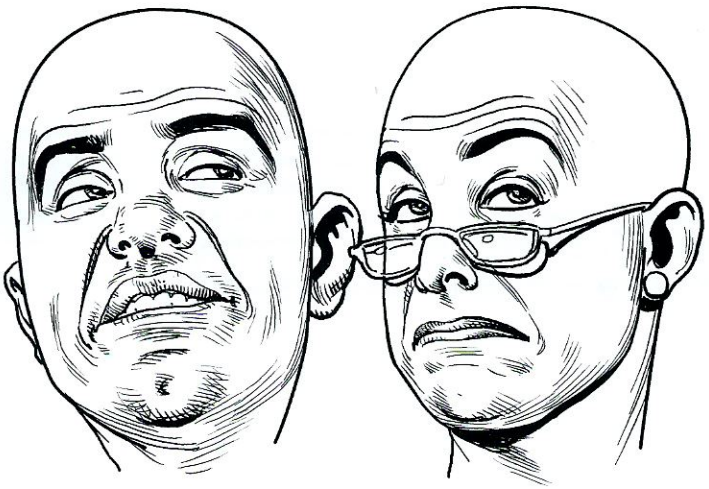
This is supposed to be about the eyes, but I must say it's difficult to demonstrate the eyes and how they convey expression and mood without bringing in all the rest of the facial features. This is simply to illustrate the eyes as seen from the side and where they occur on the face. A common mistake is to have them too large (i.e., to have the corner of the eye nearest to the ear stretch too far towards the ear). I'm getting more stylized here. I think I'm loosening up.





SCARY SIGNALS

It's always fun to draw scary faces. Have the eyebrows low over the eyes with their outer tips arched right up. The irises and pupils of the eyes look best when they are only just visible, pushed up to the top eyelid. With a male face you have the luxury of piling on wrinkles and creases to emphasize the expression. With the female face, if you need to make it glamorous as well as scary (yes, sexism is alive and well in the world of comics), you can't have it ravaged with lines. Keep the lines smoother than with the male face. I've given Jill dark, Gothy eye makeup, especially under the eyes.



THEHIGHROAD

Bill and Jill seem to be going through some changes. Don't expect to see them in their own comic book anytime soon. Bill's face is supposed to show how, when the head is tilted back, the eyes appear to occupy a higher position in the head. The ears never change position when the head is tilted in this way, so keep them down at the jaw, not between the eyes and the tip of the nose as is normally the case; this will give a convincing impression that you're looking up at his face. Both faces are supposed to demonstrate a range of emotions by moving the eyebrows and the eyelids. They'd look a lot better with hair, but *Wizard* isn't paying for hair. Hair would be extra!



FEARANDGRIMACES

I've taken Bill's face on the left, opened the eyes in fright and dramatically underlit it. The lower lids are casting a shadow in the form of a dark line on the cornea (the whites of the eyes). The irises and pupils are rolled down, only half visible, to suggest extreme panic. I've taken Jill's face on the right and screwed it into a grimace in order to show the folds of skin across the nose that flow from the partially closed eye, and the crow's feet radiating outwards. This is more noticeable on older faces, but something like it is there in all ages. You just have to look in the mirror.

I'M ALWAYS AMUSED when people look at a painting of a face in an art gallery and say, "The eyes follow you 'round the room!" Well, if eyes are looking at you out of a two-dimensional image then they'll be looking at you wherever you are. That's the magic of drawing eyes!

All eyes are on Brian Bolland when he draws such classics as DC's Camelot 3000 *and* Batman: The Killing Joke.

NOSES

BY BRIAN BOLLAND

What can I say about the nose? It differs from the eyes in that while there are two of them there's only one of it!

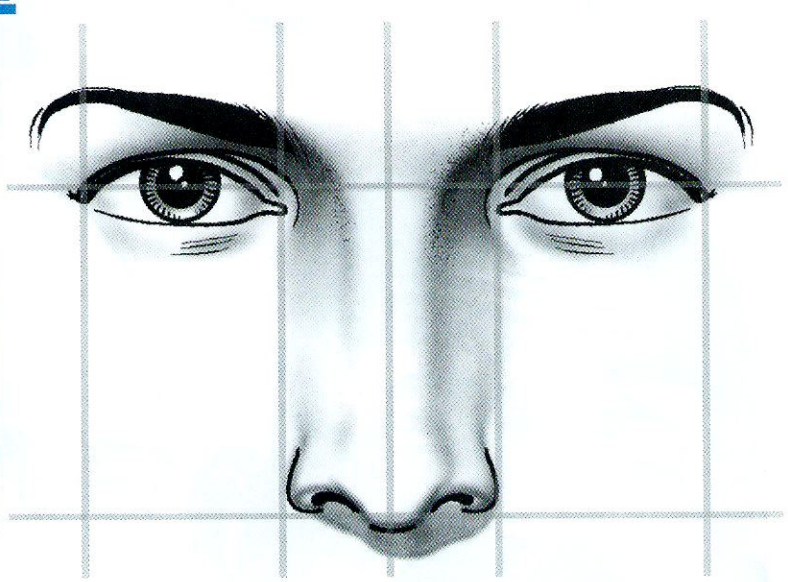
As an artist on a lot of projects, including *Judge Dredd*, *Taboo* and too many covers to count, I've had lots of practice drawing noses.

The nose doesn't express emotion the way the eyes and the mouth do. The nostrils flair and arch during emotional states, but apart from that, the nostrils merely get pulled about by the mouth and the bridge of the nose wrinkles along with the skin around the eyes. It's a part of expressions formed by the eyes, nose and mouth working together.

KEEPITINLINE

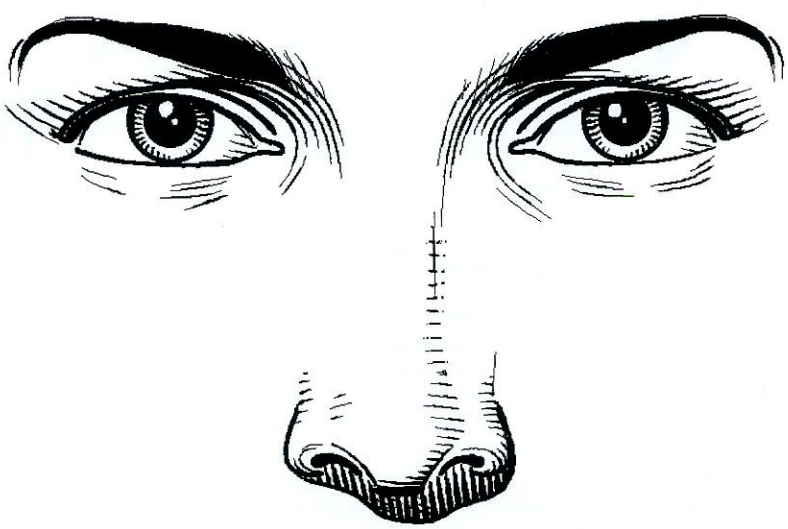
Okay, let's tackle the nose. The nose isn't capable of expressing emotions the way the eyes and mouth can. You can't exactly move it about. The nostrils are made up of a softer material than the bridge of the nose, and they stretch and flair when the eyes and mouth are pulling the face around; I'll cover that later. The distribution of light and shade on a nose is quite subtle and, seen from the front, would look something like this example.

When you're drawing the nose straight on, or "in line," however, you've got to decide how much of this tone you show. Comic art, by its very nature, is a process of simplifying—taking shortcuts in fact—so let's begin by attempting to render the figure in line.



SIMPLIFIED

In our second example, I've simplified the drawing. For such a large structure on a human face, it's surprising, though, that the less visible a nose, the better it is—particularly on a female face.

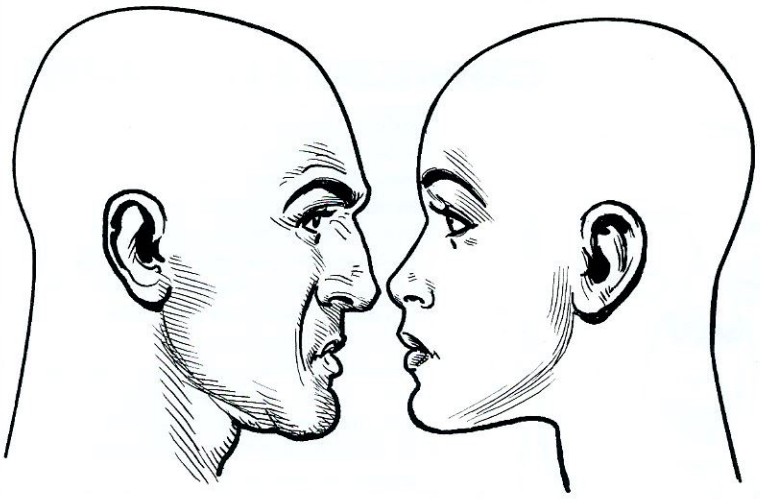


PRETTYFACE

Here's the equivalent female nose from the previous male face. I drew all the lines that you see on the male nose and one by one erased them (take my word for it, I did). The more I de-emphasized the nose, the prettier the face became.



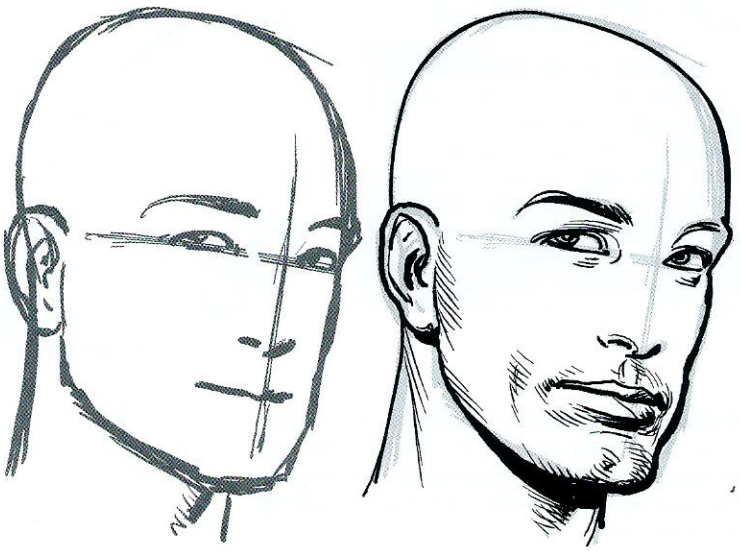
NOSETONOSE



In profile you can see the differences between a male and female nose. I, personally, would put a slight outward curve on the bridge of the male nose and a few extra lines to suggest skin texture and emphasize his rugged masculinity. The female nose is finer and the skin texture smoother. In real life, women have Roman noses and different-shaped noses just like men, but in comics, at some point, you'll be expected to draw this kind of nose. It slopes smoothly upward like a ski slope and the underside of it is more upturned than the man's. It doesn't stick out as far, either. The upper and lower lips and the chin protrude further forward than with the man. Since the skin is smoother, you have to accomplish this with as few lines as possible.

HALFANOSE

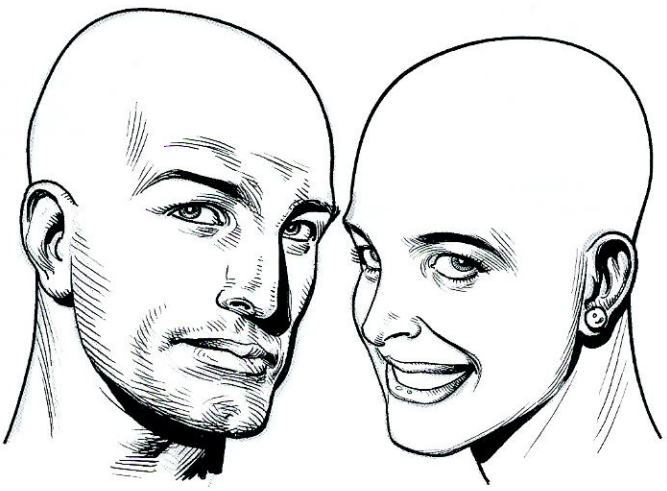
For a three-quarter shot, I would build the face up like this, with the eyes in place on the oval of the skull, a hint of the mouth and a suggestion of one nostril and the tip of the nose. Then, on the right here, I would flesh out the face complete with expression but leave out the bridge of the nose. The face like this looks strangely complete. You could, in fact, leave out the bridge of the nose altogether. Nobody would notice.



NOSES

THEBRIDGE

The major difference in this example is the inclusion of the bridge of the nose. Having positioned the eyes, we now find that Bill's nose partially covers the left one. That's not a problem. The bridge of Jill's nose completely obscures her right pupil. She can't see us out of that eye. Her smile has pulled the skin of her lower face backward and upward. As a consequence her nostril has stretched backward and upward, making the nose appear less upward-pointing at the tip than in her previous portrait (the side view).



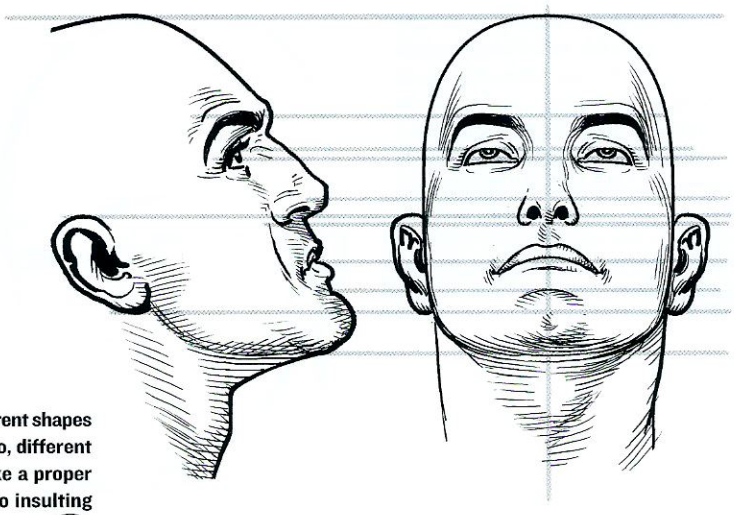
COMEDY&HORROR



Fortunately, if you're easily bored, the nose comes in all shapes and sizes and can stretch and wrinkle in all kinds of expressive ways. For the scary face, returning to an earlier drawing from the "Eyes" lesson (see page 48), I've emphasized the gnarled look of the nose and deepened and lengthened the shadow to make the nose look bigger. The potato-shaped nose on the right, tilted up and with the nostrils pulled down by the opening of the mouth, has more of a comic effect. When mixed together to the right degree, realism and caricature—the comedic and the horrific—make for expressive drawings.

LOOKINGUP

Tilting the head back and viewing the nose and the whole face from below can be a tricky thing to pull off. In this case I had the luxury of construction lines running from the face on the left to help me get the proportions more or less right. As the head tilts further back and the tip of the nose is above the eyes it's even harder to get right, but we'll cover that in the next section on mouths. See you there.



THE NOSE DOES COME in all sorts of different shapes and sizes. Does anyone remember Tiny Tim? Also, different ethnic groups have different-shaped noses. Take a proper look at them and be very careful not to slip into insulting racial stereotyping.

MOUTHS BY BRIAN BOLLAND

As I was working on the "Eyes" section (see page 46), I realized there were so many things I wanted to say about the eyes, nose and mouth that the drawings kept mounting up. There are still many things left unsaid, especially about the mouth. The mouth is the most flexible and, really, the most expressive organ of the face. Each expression requires the lips to lift, drop and stretch across the rigid structure of the teeth in just the right way. When you've worked that out, you have to consider tilting the head up or down or playing light and shadow across it. I can't imagine an artist who has never looked at photo reference getting it right.

MOUTH PIECES

Five years of my career were spent drawing *Judge Dredd*, and that ruined any ability I might have had to draw proper lips. Now I have a droopy mustache, and I can't actually see my upper lip. What reference I've collected tells me that the lips look something like **Figure A**. Below the septum of the nose (the bit of cartilage between the nostrils), the oval dimple known as the philtrum extends down to, but doesn't quite touch, the cupid's bow of the upper lip. There's the vague hint at where hair would grow into a mustache, thereby making the face look more male.

For the female face (**Figure B**), I've left off all the skin texture and piled on the makeup, particularly the lipstick.

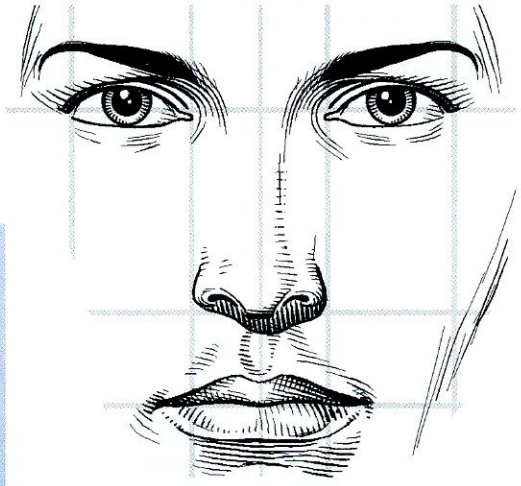
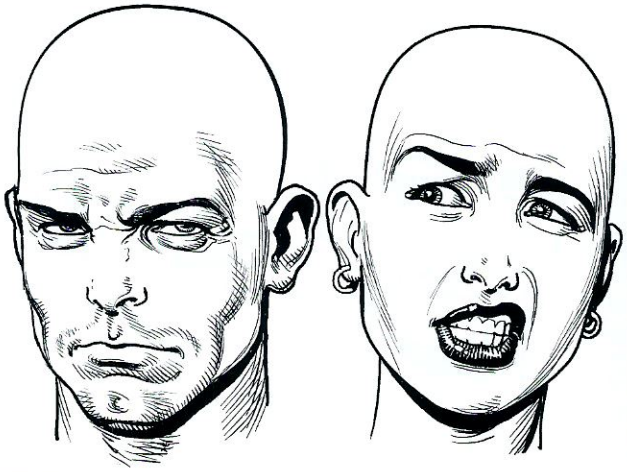


FIGURE A



FIGURE B





LIPSHTICK

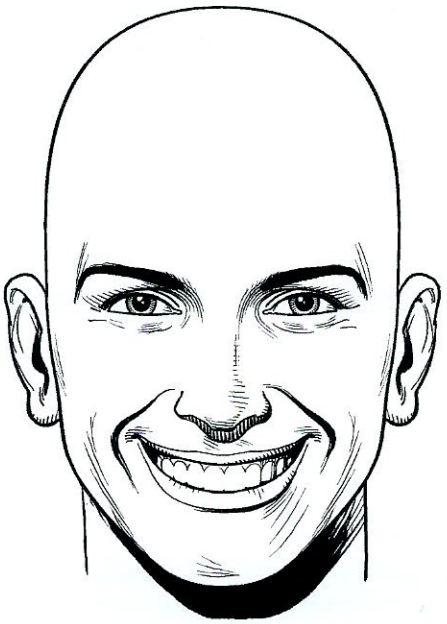
In the world of comics, the male face seems to look better and more macho without an upper lip. We tend to leave out the creases or laugh lines that stretch from the nostrils to the corners of the mouth.

I'm not quite sure what expression I'm trying to achieve with the female face. The lips are the most malleable part of the face and can be pushed around into almost any position. To correspond to recognizable expressions, you need to get the lips into the right place.

SMILEFORTHECAMERA

Let's attempt a smiling face. You can smile with your lips open or shut. If they're open, as is the case with Bill to the right, the upper lip rises up and reveals the gums of the upper teeth. The bottom lip and the tips of the upper teeth are pretty much touching. Try smiling yourself and you'll feel this contact. The upper teeth themselves are a rigid part of the skull and can't move up and down, so the lips—the whole mouth, in fact—have to rise up, making the gap between the upper lip and the nose seem very small and the chin surprisingly long.

The tip of the nose remains in the same place, but the skin around the nostrils will widen and rise up a bit. From front on, you won't really see the nostrils themselves. There's no getting away from drawing laugh lines here. As I said before, remember to lift the lower eyelids until they're almost straight lines.





LAUGHITUP

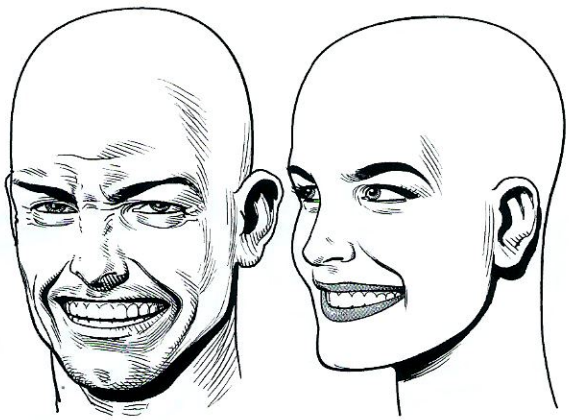
When you laugh, you open your jaws. The upper lips would be in a similar position to the smile (i.e., over the top teeth), but the downward stretching of the whole face pulls the corners down. You will see the bottom teeth (to some extent) and the tongue. The lower jaw has pivoted backward and the lower teeth will be seen from slightly above. You could even see a filling or two. The laugh lines will certainly be there and, most importantly, the face becomes longer and the jaws—the bits below the ears—taper and narrow. The eyes will narrow and wrinkle, and the nose might wrinkle too. You've got to get the degree of wrinkling just right or you could be making the face look older than it is.

FACIALDETAILS

Or try doing it this way. Bill's smiling, but his upper lip isn't curling upward at all; he's just showing a full set of teeth. Jill's expression is one of my favorites on a female face—and one, though I've been trying for years, I've yet to get right.

The left corner (her left) of Jill's lips is slightly obscured by the downward crease of the laugh line. Try to follow the septum of the nose down to the vertical plane just above the top lip, then diagonally over the lip itself (accounting for the thickness of the skin there)—that's where the gap between the middle teeth should be. You then somehow have to draw both lips as if they're folded around the rigid structure of the upper teeth.

The curved line representing Jill's right cheek, which runs from her right eye down to the chin, is very important and takes quite a bit of skill to get right. The smile causes the cheeks to puff out, so the line has to curve out, but the pulling back of the corners of the mouth bring the cheek line back in. The chin itself sticks out. The final vertical part of the cheek line before it goes round the chin and under the jaw actually lines up with the right (Jill's right) corner of the mouth. Confused? You will be.



PROFILE GRINS

Seen in profile, the smile and the laugh would look something like this. It's not exactly the same because Bill's mouth is slightly more open than before. This is one where you can't look in the mirror to get it right. Notice that Jill's lower jaw has swung on its hinge somewhere 'round about the ears. The lower set of teeth is angled downwards—that's why you can see the fillings in the front view—and the chin has swung down and back.

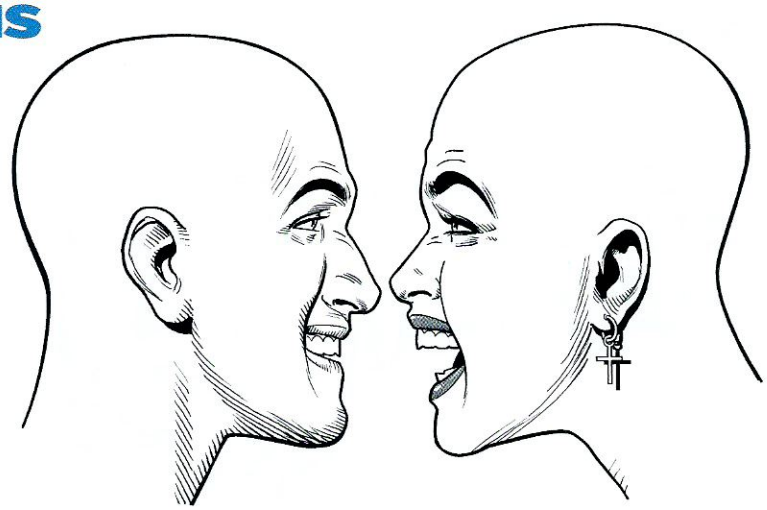


FIGURE C

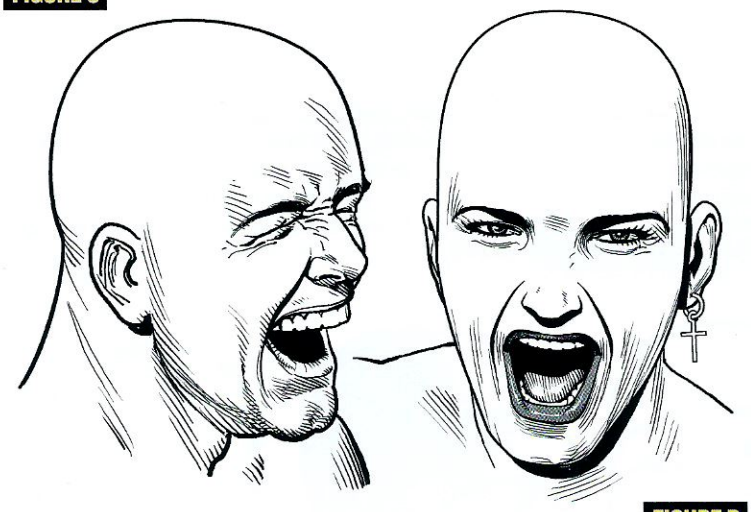


FIGURE D

FROM LAUGHTER TO ANGER

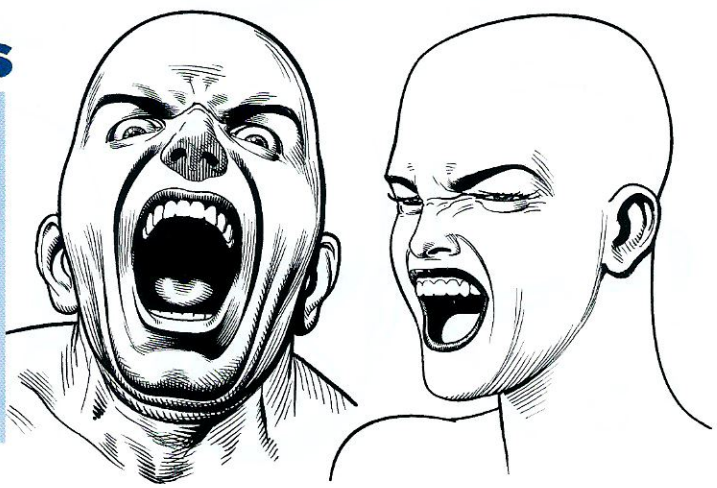
When you laugh, you tend to throw your head back and end up with a lot of difficult poses to master, so I'll cover that later. Laughter wrinkles up the eyes and throat in ways you'll only know if you take a look at photos. That's what I've done here with Bill (**Figure C**). The trouble with using photo reference is that you can end up with a face that looks a lot like the person in the picture and not very much like the character you're drawing.

It's only a small step from laughter to a range of other facial expressions. By exposing a bit less teeth and arching up parts of the upper lip, you end up with, in **Figure D**, shouting or anger.

STRETCHING THE BOUNDARIES

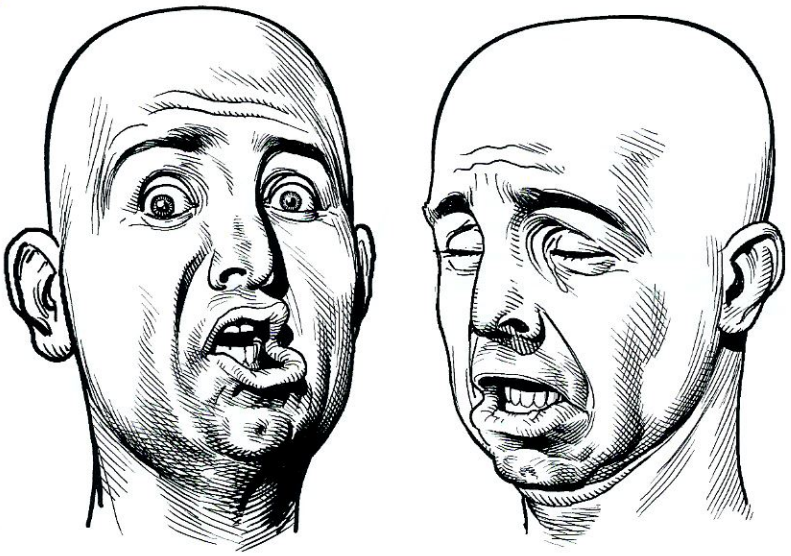
Here you can see, on Bill's face, the foreshortening of the nose as the head tilts back and, as the mouth opens wide, the narrowing of the lower jaw. As the face stretches, vertical creases form, and you can end up with a couple of extra chins. Also, tendons stick out and stretch down the neck. All of this can emphasize the expression.

It's easier to pull and stretch faces into these positions if they don't have to be good-looking. It's harder to take a beautiful face, pull it into extreme expressions, and have it remain beautiful—as my previous drawings and this drawing of Jill plainly illustrates. She'd look better with hair, though.



CARICATURE

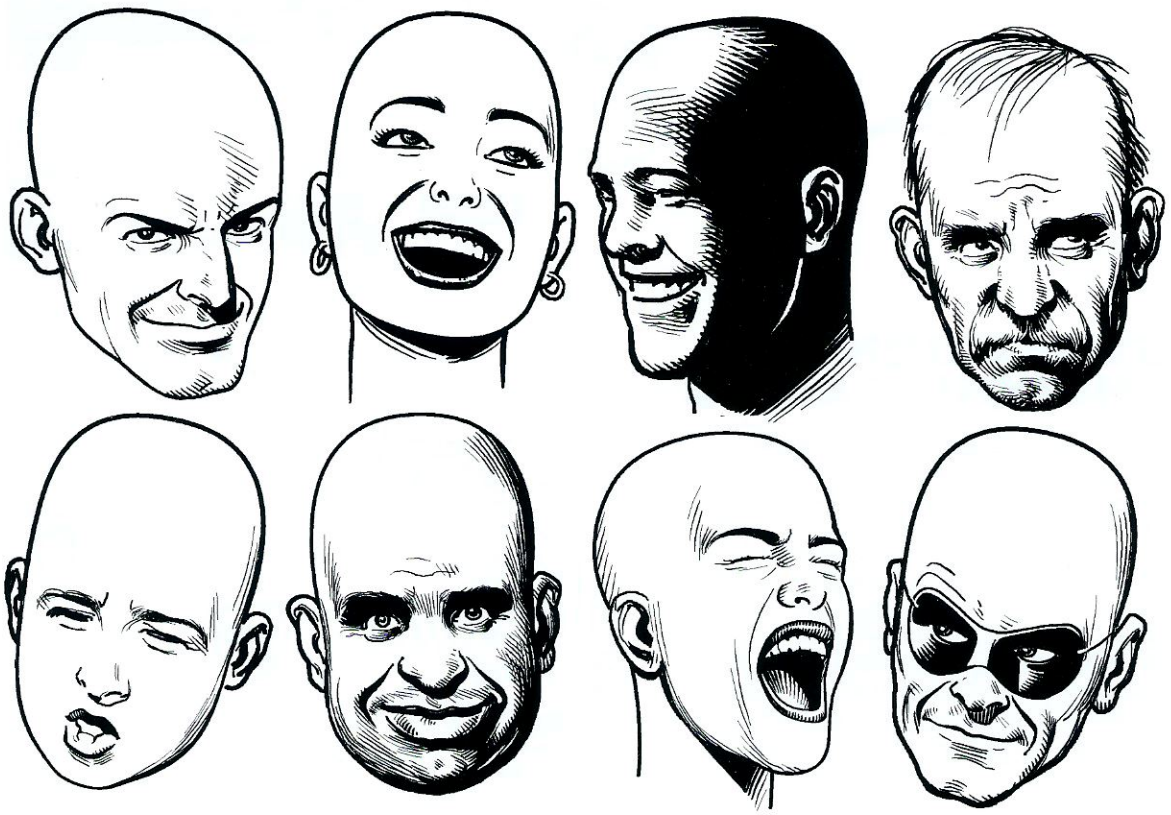
The lower lip is almost as prehensile as an elephant's trunk, and there's almost no limit to the ways you can draw it. In the case of sad faces, you could drop the lower lip like this to show the bottom teeth and gums. Armed with an understanding of the eyes, nose and mouth, and the way they express emotion, you can slip into caricature. Caricature can bring more vivid life to your characters.



QUICKDRAWS

Most of the time you'll be drawing very small faces and there won't be the time or the space to include all the lines I've drawn on the faces so far, so you have to simplify. Take all the elements that you know about the eyes, nose, mouth, ears, chin, etc. and render them in as few essential lines as possible. If you're trying to show a darker skin tone, you will have to use more shadow or texture.

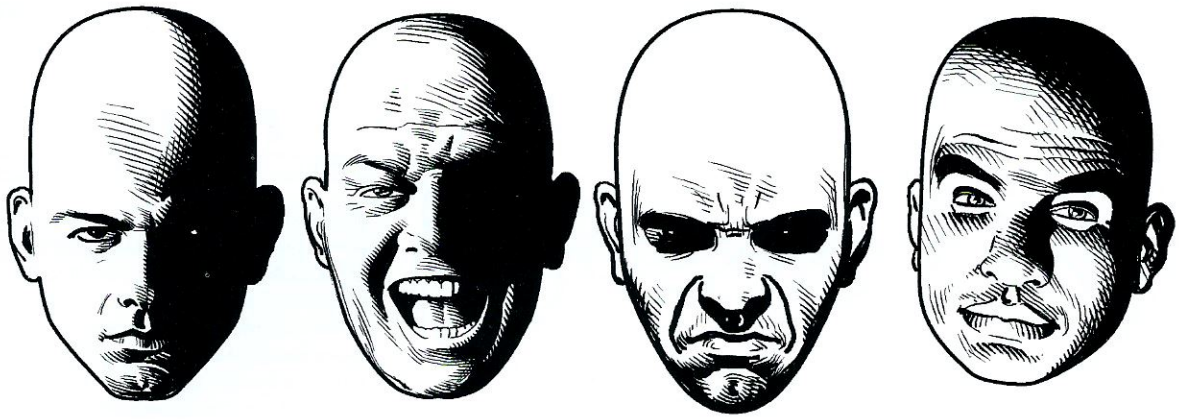
I tried to draw the faces here as quickly as possible. One or two of them I'd go back and improve on before the final printing, but I've left them here for two reasons: 1) To make you feel better about your drawing; and 2) Because it's my pub night and there's a pint of Guinness waiting with my name on it.



LIGHTANDDRAMA

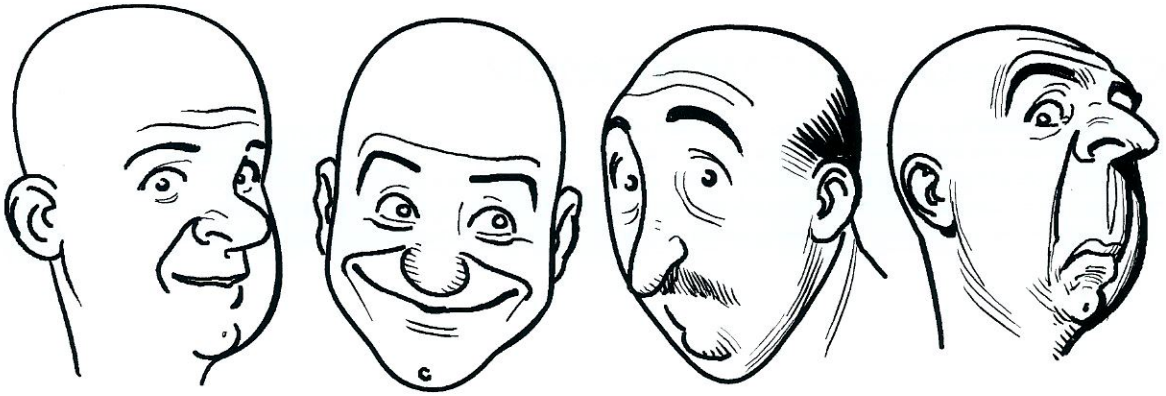
Just to round things off, it's worth putting a bit of dramatic shadow on the face—in this case, two with the light source from the left, the other two from above and below. There are many ways of lighting the face, including from two sources, which there isn't room to cover here.

I'll let you into a couple of trade secrets: I've got a book of clippings of faces and occasionally I swipe from them shamelessly, including two of the faces here. (Thank you, Jack!) Also, for my professional works, I always have my light source coming from the left. That way I can have my shadows falling in similar ways. I can seem to work it out that way. If it comes from the right, I have to scratch my head a bit.



ABSTRACTHEADS

Finally, we have four very abstracted—you might call them cartoony—heads. It's a case of knowing the principles of how a face works in order to bend them and break them to best effect. If in doubt, just draw a Smiley Face. Give it a go. You know you can do it.



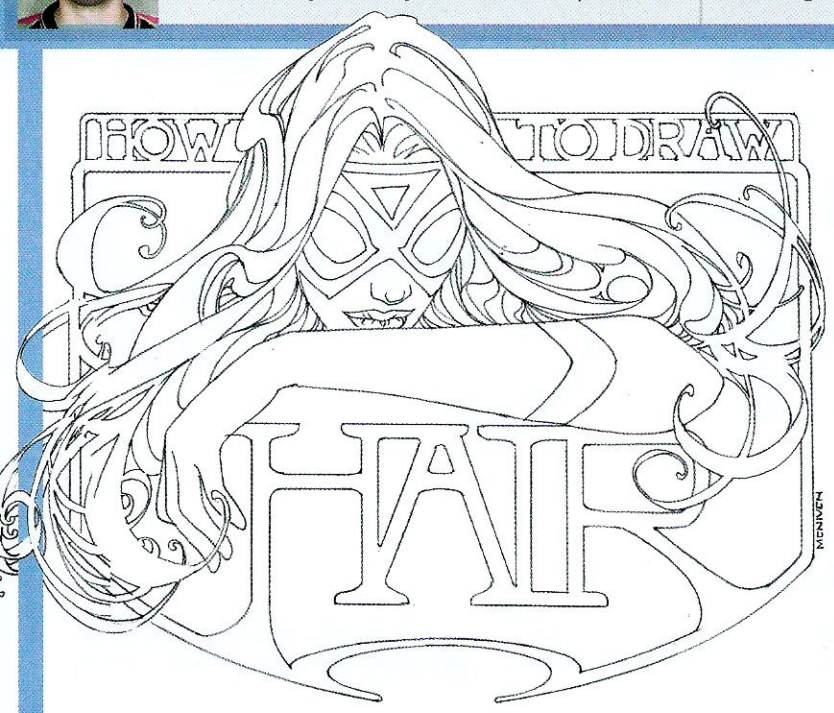
THE EYES, NOSE AND MOUTH are not three separate things; they are connected together by muscle and tissue, and anything that the face expresses is done so by the eyes, nose and mouth moving, stretching and working together. A smile, for instance, is something that involves the whole face.

Drawing can be a very frustrating business. What I've presented you with here is how I would draw some of these things. It's not the definitive way, of course. If you want to know how to draw beautiful women take a look at Adam Hughes' work, or Charles Dana Gibson. For a fine classical face, you want Barry Windsor-Smith. For photo-real, dramatically angled and dramatically lit faces, go for Alex Ross. For sheer all-'round excellence, you should take a look at J.C. Leyendecker or Norman Rockwell. Learn from all the great artists. And most importantly, there's always a face available to draw from—just look in the mirror.

HAIR BY STEVE McNIVEN



Hey folks! Steve McNiven here to show you the nuts and bolts of drawing hair, specifically the stuff that grows on your noggin. (I'm gonna leave back, underarm, toe and any other body hair outta this one!) Hair, or the lack of it, helps an artist define a character. Drawing it can be a struggle, for its structure can change with a gust of wind. By getting a few pointers under your belt, hopefully I can make things a bit easier for you.



METHOD TO THE MADNESS

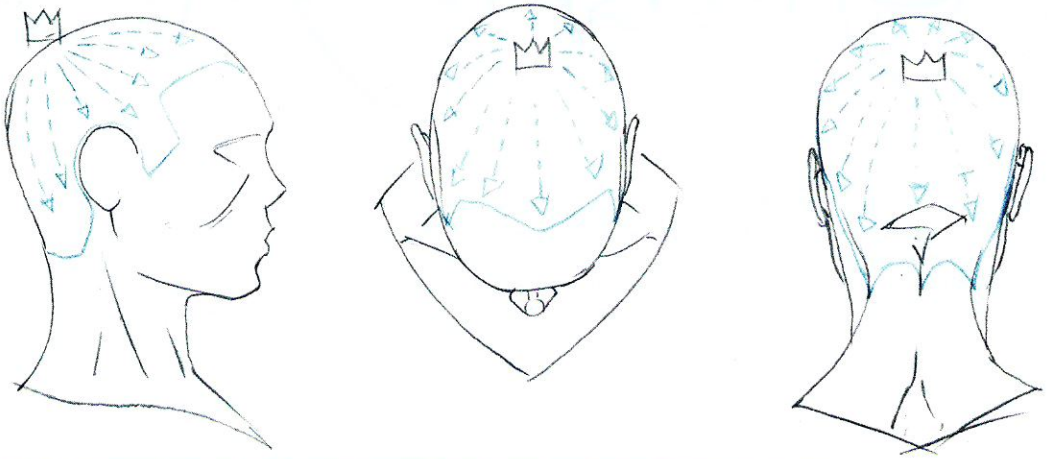
My overall method of drawing is similar to the cleaning up of storyboard drawings or the methods of a traditional animator. I begin with a loose sketch of the head on standard bond paper, trying to capture the movement of the hair without worrying about the details, just getting a flow and direction that works. I use a .05 mechanical pencil for all my drawing.

When I have a good, suggestive drawing, I put it on the lightbox and place another sheet of paper on top and begin to tighten up my drawing, keeping in mind some of the pointers that I'll discuss here. That's just a way that works for me. These pointers should hopefully fit into whatever method you are comfortable with.

CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT

I'm assuming that you have a good grasp of the structure of the human head, 'cause that's where it all begins. Here's a loose structural drawing of Sue Storm's head from the side, top and back. On this I have placed lines depicting the hairline (where the hair stops growing on the head) and the direction that I keep in mind for how hair grows out of the head.

Hairlines differ with each character, mostly at the front of the head. The most common use of a receding hairline (a hairline that has moved towards the crown of the head) is to show age. The direction of hair growth is more or less similar in all people, starting from the crown, or top of the head, and spreading out and down to the hairline.



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STYLE OVER SUBSTANCE

With the structure all worked out, I loosely draw in the hair, keeping in mind the style of the haircut. Hair by itself doesn't differ visually between men and women. It differs only in the style of haircut. With this in mind, we can reinforce the design of the character by the choice of hairstyle. Conversely, the character can also dictate the type of hairstyle used: For example, a soldier would more likely have a buzz cut or a flattop rather than a ponytail, while stereotypical villains tend to have a widow's peak or a receded hairline with a pronounced "V" shape.



MOVE IT OR LOSE IT

Another aspect of drawing hair is to imply movement. With static images, any chance you can get to imply movement should be acted upon. Wind in the hair is an obvious choice; so is the sudden movement of the character's head. Again, try to capture the overall movement in a loose gesture drawing.



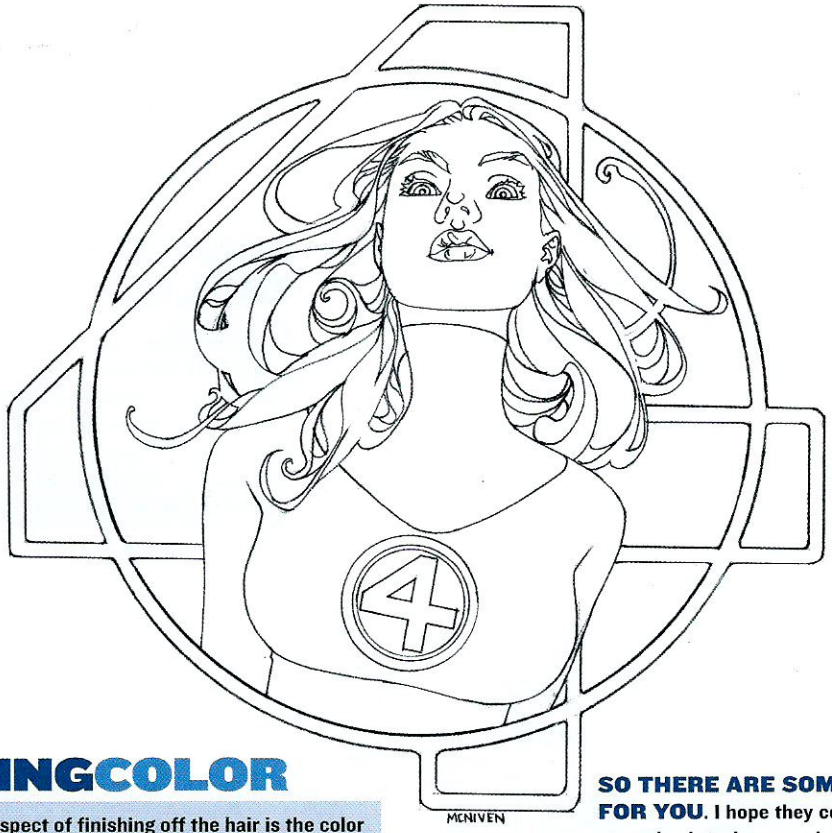
SEPARATE WAYS

With the overall structure and style of the hair in place, I start to tighten up the drawing by separating the larger locks of hair, all the time trying to keep the gesture that I had in the original drawing.



ADDINGLOCKS

Now I go in and start to bring in thinner locks, trying to create variety in the hair movement while remaining true to the overall direction.



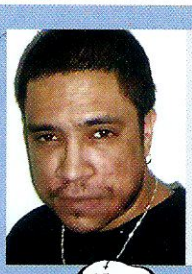
LIVINGCOLOR

Another aspect of finishing off the hair is the color of the hair. This is where rendering comes into play. With my particular style of drawing, I tend to do no rendering for light-colored hair, while blacking in the hair for dark-colored hair. Additionally, for dark hair, you can put in some highlights to give an added dimension to the hair if you so choose. Highlights will be placed according to where you have decided to place your light source(s), usually falling on those areas of the hair that are facing the light source and are convex or rolling outward from the head.

SO THERE ARE SOME QUICK POINTERS FOR YOU. I hope they come in handy. One thing to remember is to do research. Look at a bunch of different artists and try to break down how they tackle hair, both in the structure and rendering. One favorite of mine is to look at the artwork of 20th-century illustrators, particularly of the art-nouveau movement. There's a gold mine of stuff out there beyond what's being done inside comic books! Go out and find it!

Steve McNiven's salon-friendly women and hair-raising action scenes can be found in titles such as Marvel's New Avengers *and* Civil War.

FACES BY JUSTINIANO



Greetings! To a few, I'm known as Justiniano. But to you, as of now, I'm known as "the guy who taught you how to draw a face." Actually, I don't think I can teach you how to draw anything. Only you can teach yourself. I, however, will show you a few simple steps toward a common goal: to draw a face.

First, let me assure you that anyone can draw a face (or other things, for that matter). It's just a question of what you're trying to achieve. You could draw a circle with two dots for eyes and a line for a mouth and anyone in the world will recognize it as a face. Trouble arises when you try to emulate someone else's way of doing it; you might not be happy with the results simply because it might not resemble that other person's face.



FACIAL EXPRESSIONS BY KEVIN MAGUIRE

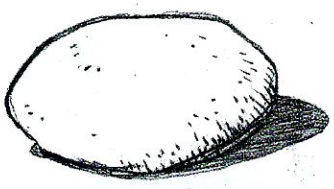
Ever since I got started in this biz, people have always commented on my use of faces, asking me who my influences were. That's easy: Chuck Jones.

If you're not hip to old Warner Bros. cartoons, he's one of the all-time great animation directors and creator of Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner. Check out any scene where Wile E. sets a trap for his fleet-footed adversary and notice the smug look on his face. No need for dialogue. Then watch the trap go horribly wrong. For me, the hysterical part wasn't when the boulder crushed him, it was the pathetic look on Wile E.'s face just seconds before, when he realized he was screwed.

Knowing just what type of expression to give your character is an important skill. So grab your pencil and let's get emotional!

CREATINGLIFE

I once had an idea for a comic following the life of a rock. Yeah, I can hear you: "The story of a rock? Who cares?!" Sure, intellectually, we might learn something about geology, but emotionally, you're right. Who cares? There's nothing to relate to, and that's my point.



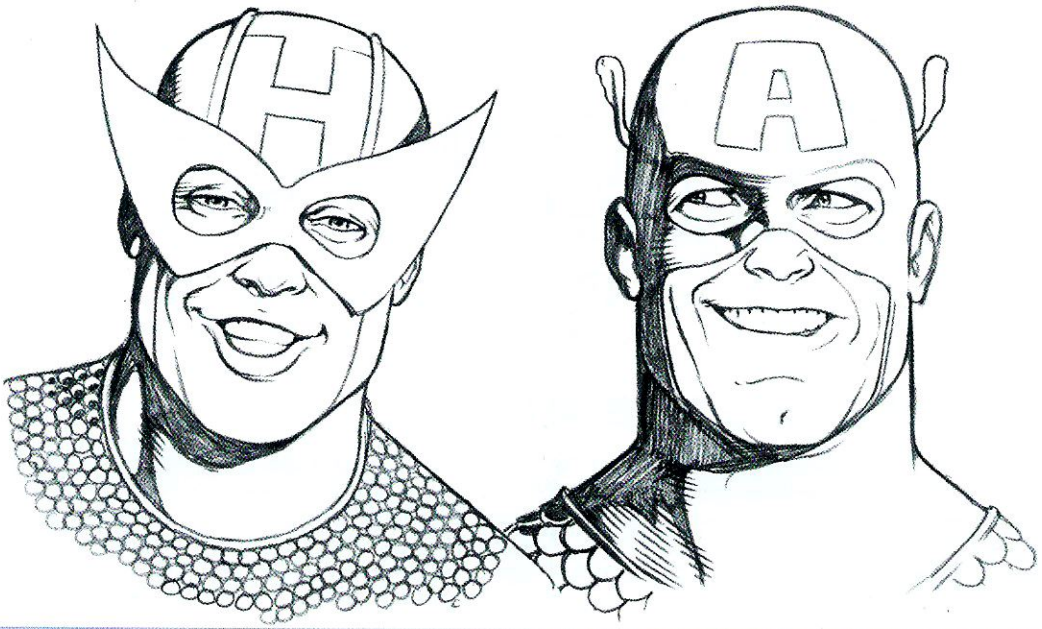
KODAKMOMENT

Okay, you're given a script where Hawkeye and Captain America are chatting with a couple of women. Hawkeye's doing the talking. Let's say his dialogue's something like this:

"Hello there, ladies. You're looking mighty fine. I'm Hawkeye of Avengers fame and this is my trusty little sidekick, the Capster!"

The interesting expression here belongs to Captain America. It's a snapshot in time. The exact moment he hears his intro. Not before. Not after.

Now, there are a lot of valid directions you could go with his look, like intense fury or surprise. I chose this moment, because it's the most interesting. It's during an emotional transition between being happy and insulted. It's a reaction that's unique to this moment, as opposed to showing him purely insulted, which could apply almost anywhere. (Especially with friends like Hawkeye.)



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FACIAL EXPRESSIONS



CHARACTER ACTING

A good way to work is to think of yourself as a director, and your characters as actors. It's your job to make them perform. Personally, I never think of comic characters as costumes with powers. To me, they're people. They each react to things differently and you don't need dialogue to get that across.

Let's use the X-Men gang as an example. Here's the story: Professor X heads into the den and fires up the Nintendo, but it won't work. It's broken! So he goes around asking who broke it. Each X-Man answers with the same four words: "I didn't break it!"

See if you can match the correct face to the thought:

A) I didn't do it, but I'm sure I'm gonna get blamed for it.
B) I can't believe you're asking me that question.
C) Oh, darn! I didn't know it was broken. That sucks!
D) How many times do I have to tell you? No I didn't!
E) Okay, I did it. But I'm not going to admit it.

I'm not gonna tell you who was thinking what. If you can't figure it out, then I haven't done my job properly. Break off into individual discussion groups if you're having trouble.



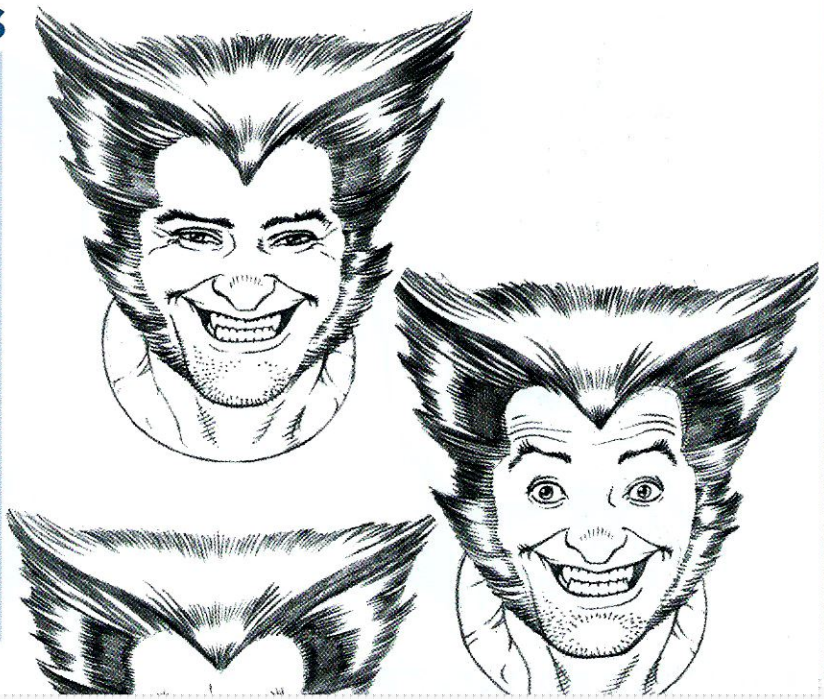
THE TWO-FACE THEORY

Let's take a look at what I call my "two-face theory." It's a bit more exaggerated than the Captain America shot on the first page, and it's something I like using with deranged characters to give them a quirky sort of expression.

It's real easy. Take a shot of the happy Sabretooth and paste it together with a shot of him furious. Check out the results by placing your hand over one side of the third illustration, then do it to the other side. Get it? It's kinda fun. Now try it with other expressions to see what kind of combinations you can come up with.

INYOUREYES

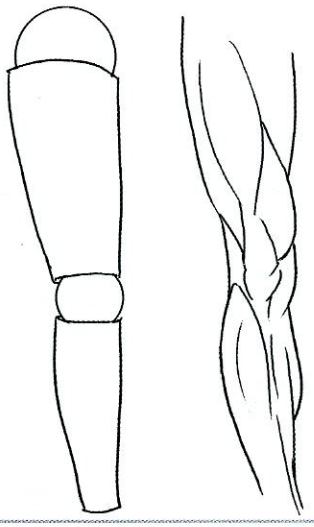
Okay, you're penciling *X-Men* and the script says two words: "Wolverine smiles." But there's more to a smile than just flashing enamel. Ask yourself what else is involved. How does he feel? Why is he smiling? Each of these three faces is exactly the same except for the eyes (and the eyebrows and forehead). Doing different things with the eyes dramatically changes the meaning of his smile. In the first illustration, Wolverine seems sincere, almost charming. In the second, he looks giddy, even goofy. Not at all the Wolverine we're used to. But the third one, that's the Wolverine we know and love. That's a smile that says "I'm gonna kill someone and enjoy it!" It's the eyes that make all the difference. They're not called the "windows to the soul" for nothing.

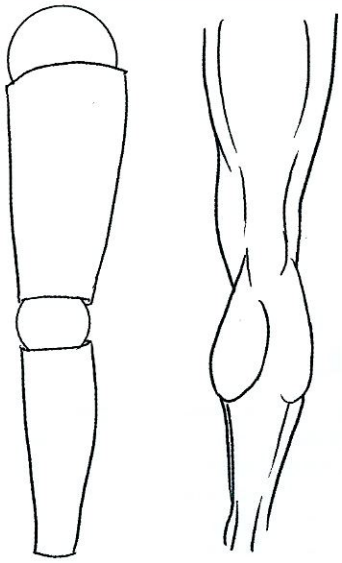


ALEGUP

Now let's take a look at the leg. Many artists neglect drawing a hero's (or heroine's) legs, and I can't for the life of me figure out why. How can you have a superhero run after a villain if he's got two lumpy blobs for pillars? Again, knowing the basic muscle groups of the leg will really make your drawings get noticed as professional-caliber art. Make sure to check out a book or website on anatomy to get a handle on 'em.

Here's a piece of good news: The basic construction of the leg is almost identical to the basic construction of the arm. (Phew!) See how it's the same simple two cylinders and three spheres assembly we used for the arm? They even move the same—the top sphere is the hip joint, which rotates around the ball joint, and the knee is another hinge joint. (While the ankle doesn't have nearly the flexibility of the wrist, it does everything the wrist can do, except hold your watch.)

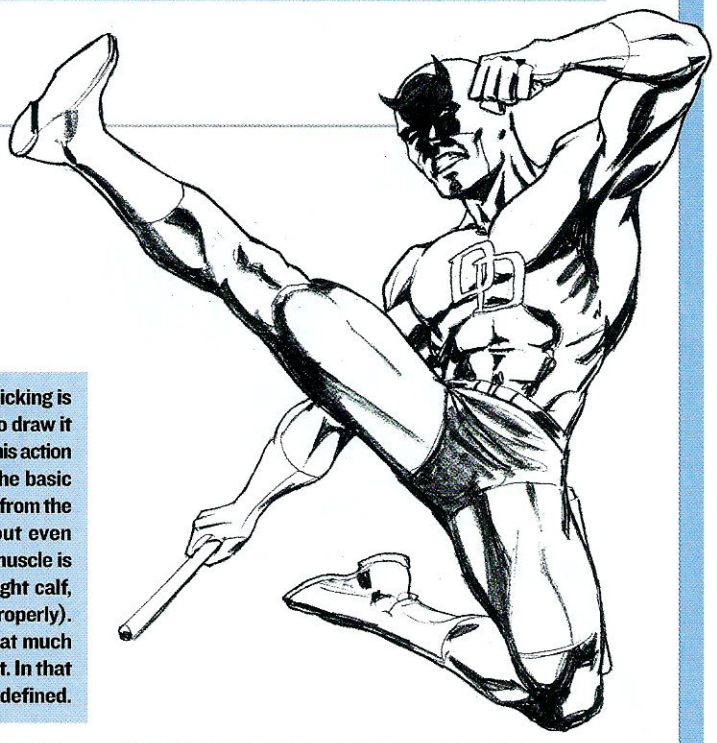




FROMTHIGHTOCALF

I'd say the muscles most comic artists focus on when drawing the leg are the three muscles sitting just above the knee. These muscles allow the leg to fully extend, like when you stand up or climb stairs. The thing to remember is that while the muscles look a little different on the leg than on the arm, the basic function and construction is the same.

However, the major muscle people's eyes go to on the leg is the calf muscle (which is actually two muscles). It's the muscle we all use to jump or tap our feet. It's important not to make the calf muscle too large; the largest muscles on the leg should always be the thigh muscles, since they provide most of the power in the leg. The one crucial difference between drawing the arm and the leg is that the leg has knees. Not a little hump between the thigh and calf, but actual knees with a kneecap and everything.



BEADAREDEVIL

Now, for my favorite part of drawing legs—kicking butt! Kicking is something every superhero does, and you better be able to draw it right, otherwise he'll look like he's practicing for the ballet. In this action shot of the Man Without Fear, we can immediately see the basic muscle groups we just sketched. Look at his legs—it's clear from the way the muscles are arranged that he's kicking, without even having to look at the rest of him. Notice how his left calf muscle is flexed (because his foot is pointed) as opposed to his right calf, which is extended (pushing his heel down so he can kick properly).

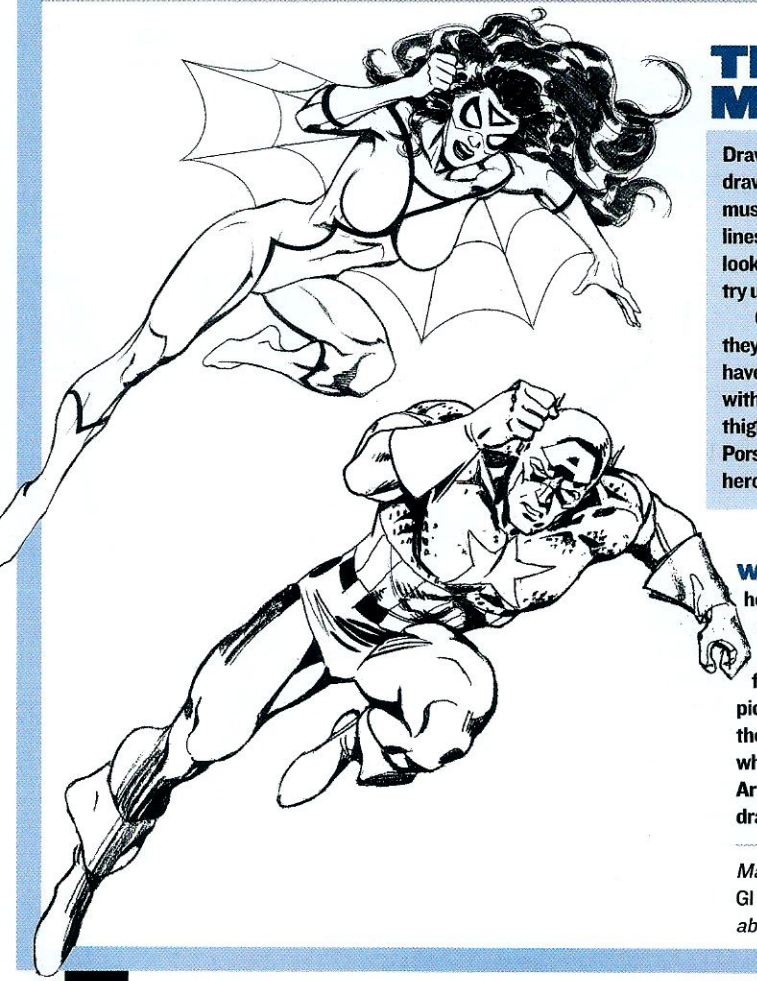
Note that the thigh muscles don't really change all that much on the leg when it's moving, except when the leg is straight. In that case, the muscles above the knee are much more clearly defined.

MALE VS. FEMALE

So, now we come to the big puzzle—how to take what we've learned about arms and legs and apply it to drawing superheroines! "Well, duh," you might say, "just make her smaller than the superhero and you're done!" Hold on there, spinach-chin. It's not simply a matter of making the female figure smaller and less muscular, but it is easier than you might think.

The basic rule of thumb here is **HERO = BIGGER MUSCLES, HEROINE = SMALLER MUSCLES.** One crucial thing to keep in mind when drawing female muscles is that they tend to be shaped more like flat, smooth rocks, whereas male muscles can be pretty large and full like balloons. You never want your heroines to look like male bodybuilders with breasts. They're different. I've lost track of how many comics I've seen with superheroines sporting huge, masculine arms and legs. You can make a heroic woman look heroic without making her look like a steroid addict. The main trick to making a superheroine look muscular while still retaining her femininity is to streamline the muscle groups (see the male/female comparisons to the right).





THE FEMALE MODEL

Drawing female legs that look heroic is a bit trickier than drawing the arms. Watch out that you don't put too much muscle definition in the legs of the female figure; too many lines weighs the drawing down visually and can make her look unattractive. When drawing superheroine muscles, try using a French curve; it makes the muscles look sleeker.

Compare Spider-Woman's right leg to Cap's. See how they have exactly the same muscle groups, yet her muscles have no obvious bulges ruining her leg outline? Same thing with her left leg: Cap's muscles are bunched up atop his thigh, while hers are flexed, yet compact. Think of a sleek Porsche as opposed to a Mack truck when drawing a female hero and you'll be well on your way.

WHEW! See? Nothing to it. Really, the best way to discover how to draw arms and legs—and anything else for that matter—is to draw! Draw every day, and not just from photographs: Draw from your imagination, draw your friends, draw at the gym or at the track or at the local pickup b-ball game. You'll quickly develop a feel for how the muscles of the limbs work together to move us around, which will make your comics really come alive! Go ahead: Arm yourself with this knowledge and leg on over to the drawing board!

Matt Haley is currently arming himself with new issues of GI Spy, *as well as* Superman Returns *for DC. Find out more about him by visiting http://www.gispyonline.com!*

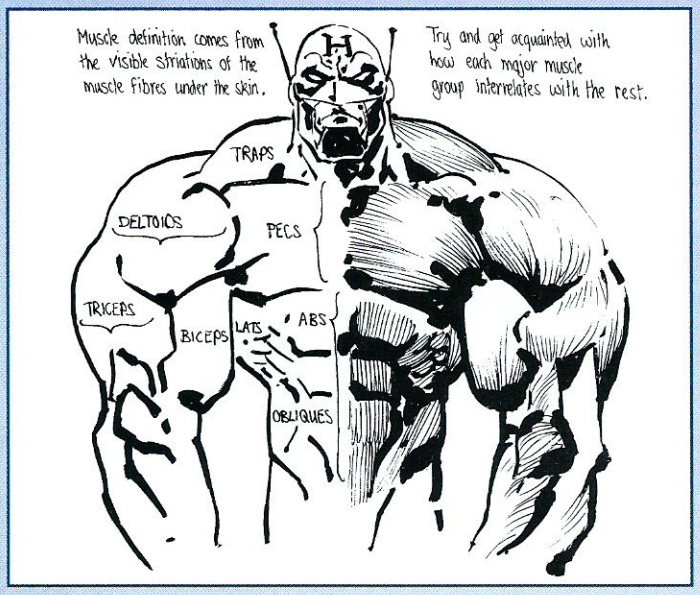
MUSCLES BY LIAM SHARP

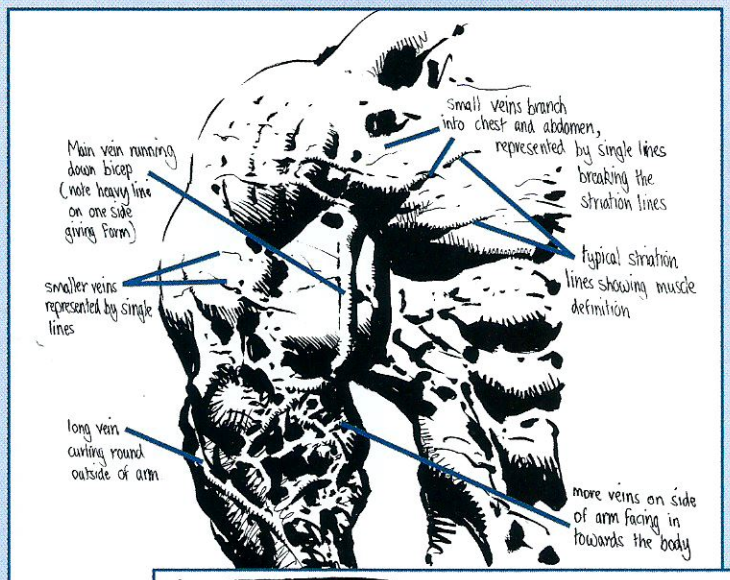
These two illustrations below will give you a feel for superhero muscles and their placement. I'll be demonstrating here how to take your figures to the extreme. We're talking muscles that make the giant redwoods look like bonsai pansies. Veins that make your body look like road maps. In reality, this would put an enormous amount of stress on our heroes, but it looks great!

HULKING OUT

Definition lends the figure tension and is the only thing that can make a hugely muscled character dynamic. So while this is not reality, a good working knowledge of musculature is important in pulling off a character like this. (By the way, the striations I refer to in the figure are just lines and bands, which are usually parallel.)

Now that we've pushed the size of our figure, the next objective is to get seriously ripped. That means muscle definition. If a figure is punching another figure, maybe only one of the puncher's pectoral muscles will be tense. Biceps and triceps are rarely evenly tensed at the same time. Stomach muscles are rarely evenly spaced. If we can learn from and apply these basic understandings of anatomy to our monstrously muscled invention, we'll be making big steps. Remember, this is not reality, but the definition you apply to your drawing is what tells you the figure's size is made up of muscle, not fat.







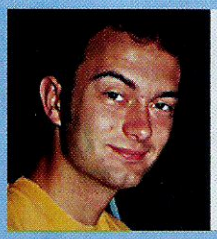
TRYING IN VEIN

To be honest, I have no idea how veins work in the forearm! What I do know is the side of the arm facing the body is the most veiny, and having one or two long veins curl around from the elbow over the outside of the arm to the wrist always looks cool. Over the biceps there is usually one hose-pipe of a vein that other smaller veins branch out of, and this is usually criss-crossed at the shoulder with other veins that may even cross over to the chest. In a truly ripped figure, there are veins everywhere.

Once I've drawn the basic figure, I bang in the veins almost at random, but still apply the loose rules outlined above. Don't draw both sides of the vein—one side of a raised surface is in shadow, the other picked out by light. (Although when a vein is coming down vertically you should suggest, rather than state, both sides by making one side a heavier line.) When veins are drawn like road maps, it looks like they're on the outside of the figure, not under the skin.

HANDS

BY GARY FRANK



First, the bad news. Hands are capable of assuming as great a complexity and variety of shapes as all the other parts of the body combined, so the idea that you can learn to draw them from a few scant pages is a little optimistic, to say the least.

As for the good news, I'll be giving you some "basic" pointers. The best way to really learn to draw hands is (as with most things) to practice with references. And loads of references are available...just look around you. Check out hands on TV. In movies. In magazines. Why, you can even use yourself as a model. After all, most people contemplating a career in drawing have access to at least one hand...

BUILDINGBLOCKS

When you begin, there are certain fundamentals which should be kept in mind. All hands have an underlying foundation. **Figure A** shows an extremely simplistic hand shape in which you can see its basic structure—the "hard points," if you like. These are the primary building blocks of the hand—they are always present no matter what position the hand adopts. The four fingers all move in a fairly restricted plane, but the seam which separates the thumb gives it opposable movement **(Figure B)**.

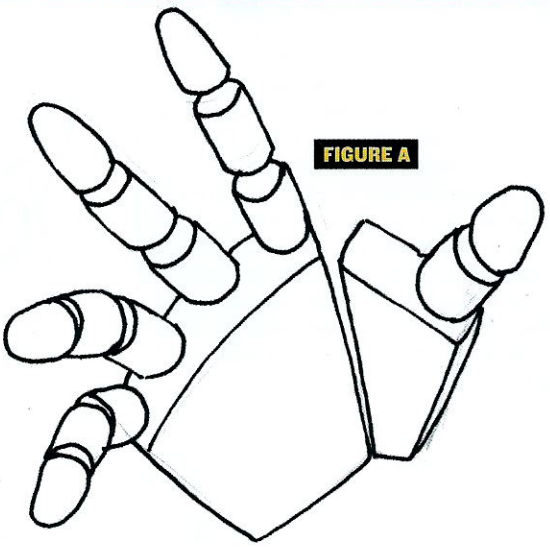


FIGURE A

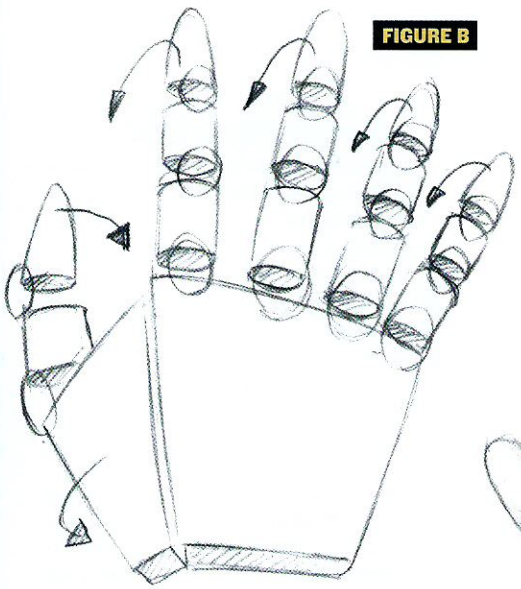


FIGURE B

The good thing about using a "building blocks" approach is that it helps you remember you are dealing with a three-dimensional structure. But while you are practicing with these shapes, you must be looking at real hands for reference. If you leave this important step until later, you will have picked up lots of bad "mechanical" habits and rules which you will find difficult to reconcile with the image of the real thing. I have no idea how many hands I have drawn over the years, but I am still surprised by the shapes they make when performing certain tasks **(Figure C)**.

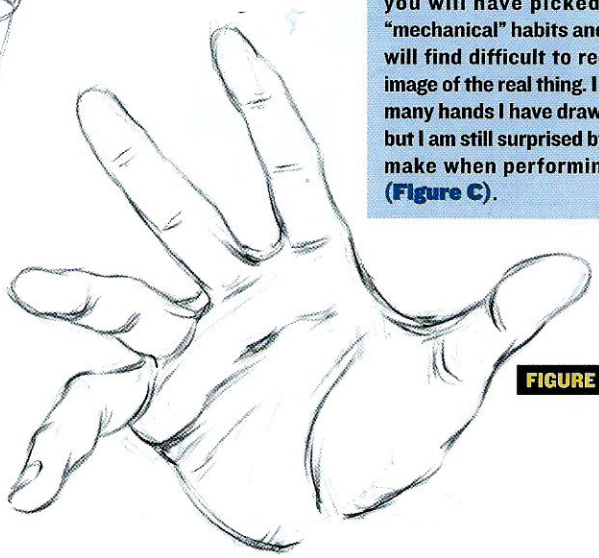
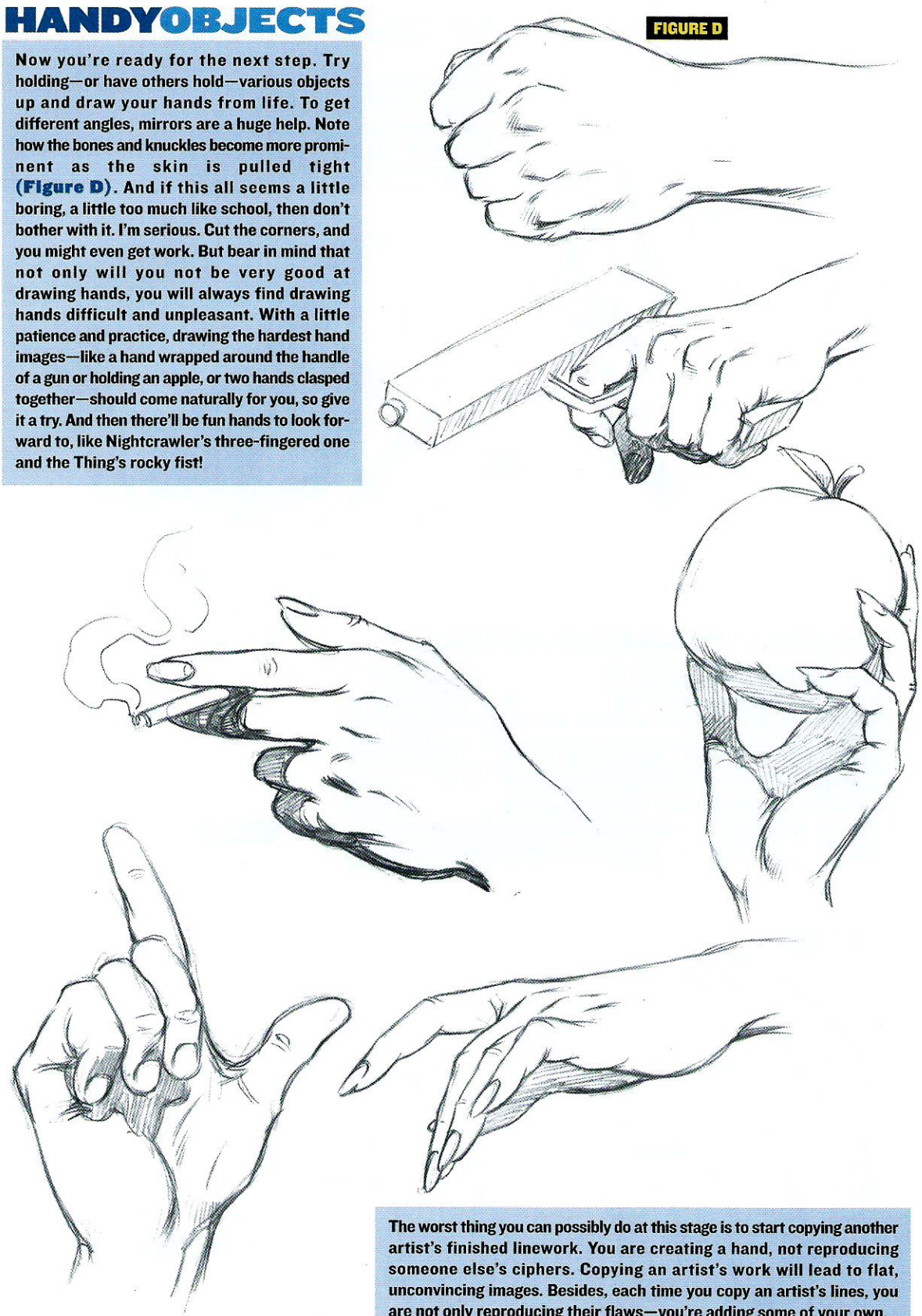


FIGURE C

HANDY OBJECTS

Now you're ready for the next step. Try holding—or have others hold—various objects up and draw your hands from life. To get different angles, mirrors are a huge help. Note how the bones and knuckles become more prominent as the skin is pulled tight **(Figure D)**. And if this all seems a little boring, a little too much like school, then don't bother with it. I'm serious. Cut the corners, and you might even get work. But bear in mind that not only will you not be very good at drawing hands, you will always find drawing hands difficult and unpleasant. With a little patience and practice, drawing the hardest hand images—like a hand wrapped around the handle of a gun or holding an apple, or two hands clasped together—should come naturally for you, so give it a try. And then there'll be fun hands to look forward to, like Nightcrawler's three-fingered one and the Thing's rocky fist!

FIGURE D



The worst thing you can possibly do at this stage is to start copying another artist's finished linework. You are creating a hand, not reproducing someone else's ciphers. Copying an artist's work will lead to flat, unconvincing images. Besides, each time you copy an artist's lines, you are not only reproducing their flaws—you're adding some of your own.

FLESHINGITOUT

Once you feel confident with basic hands, try some more complex shapes. Add light and shade as you would with simpler objects. In order to get an idea of where the shadows will fall, first decide where your light source is. Everything on the opposite side will be in shadow. Bear in mind that anything solid (like fingers, for instance) will also cast shadows.





MY,WHATBIGHANDSYOUHAVE...

Hands come in many shapes, sizes and textures. You should try to give your characters hands with an appropriate look. For instance, a woman's hand (**Figure E**) will generally be more slender and smooth than a man's (**Figure F**), while your average comic bad guy might have a hairy mitt with the odd chipped fingernail (**Figure G**). The most important point is that there can be a lot of character conveyed simply by the type of hands you choose to give someone (and while you should always try to be consistent, a weird combination of these three hands would be interesting). See, hands are more important than you thought!

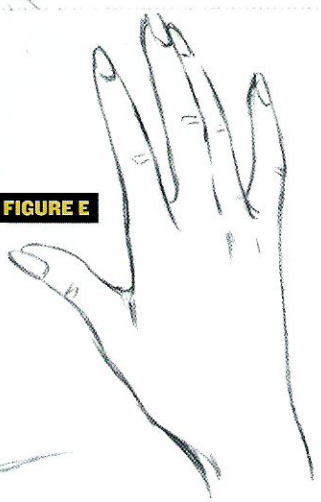


FIGURE E

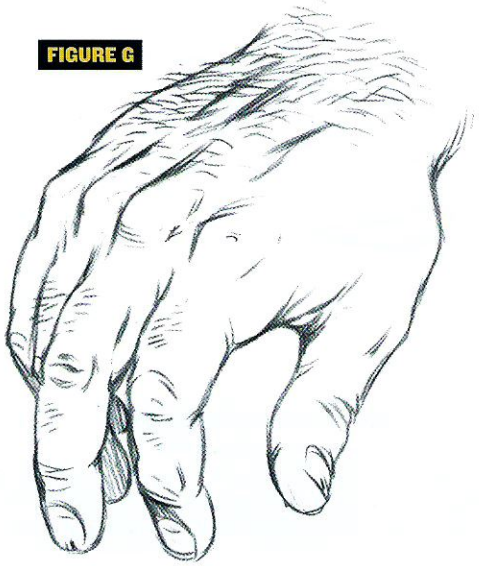


FIGURE G

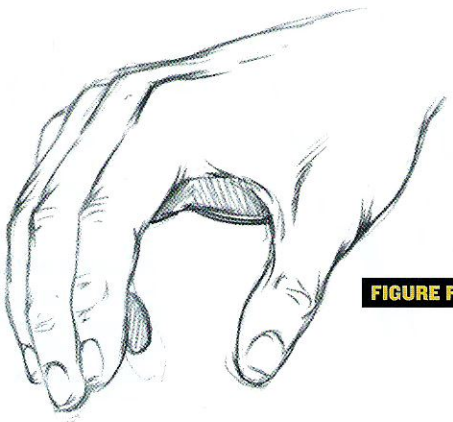


FIGURE F

SIZES&SHAPES

Now that you've got all the basics, it's time to take a look at different sizes and textures. Here I've provided a number of comparisons to show you a variety of feet.

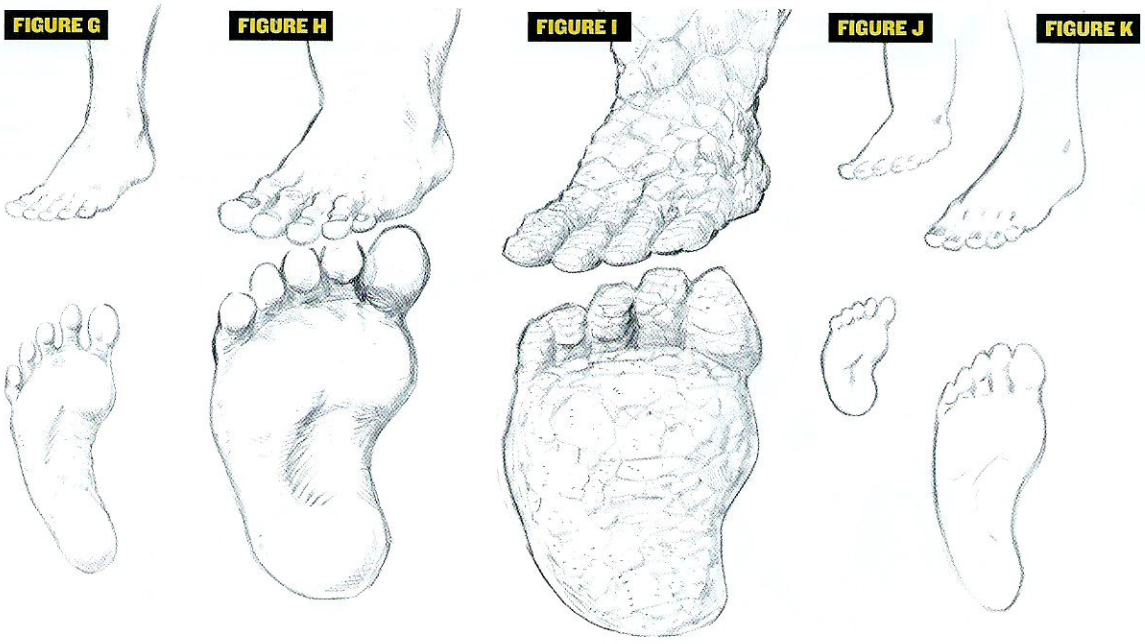


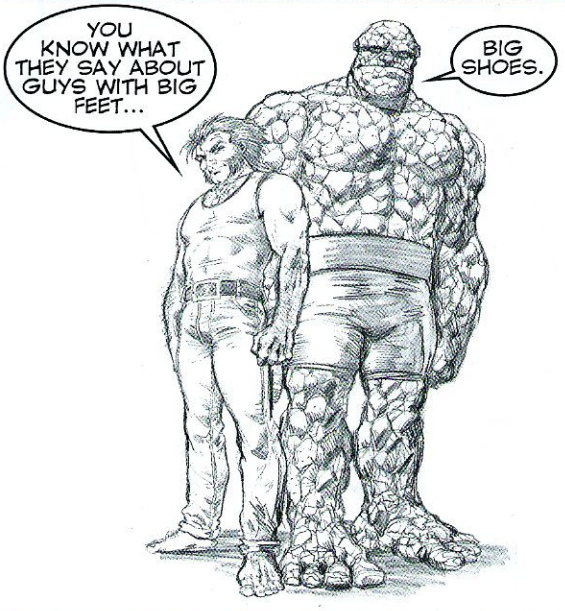
Figure G: Here's an average human adult male foot. We can determine that from the shape, size and the bit of hair on the leg.

Figure H: Here's the Hulk's foot. By using the same anatomy lessons, but making everything fatter and bigger, he looks more believable. Consider the size of the creature that a foot has to support. The bigger the creature, the bigger the foot should be! If a normal big toe is about the size of a canister to a 35mm roll of film, then the Hulk's should be the size of a soda can.

Figure I: Here's the Thing's foot. I imagine that because of his rocky skin condition, his little toe and fourth toe would sort of fuse together, which is why he seems to have four toes. Again, sticking to the correct anatomy and then adding the rocky pattern to the shape makes the Thing's foot convincing as the foot of an existing creature. It's important to indicate where his foot would bend and move. I drew smaller rocks in the bends to give the appearance of regular movement.

Figure J: A baby's foot should have very few bones showing through. Babies' feet and hands are small and undeveloped, so they should appear soft and tiny. This can be achieved by drawing fewer shadows, or smooth shadow lines.

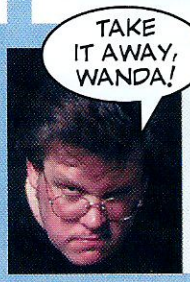
Figure K: Lastly, here's an average, human adult female foot. A good method of indicating a female foot is to make it narrower than a male foot, and smoother in texture. With the line work, less is more. Since many women shave their legs and paint their toenails, this also is a nice detail to add.



I CAN'T STRESS ENOUGH that the best place to learn, like all things, is real life. Practice drawing interesting feet from magazines. Remember that style comes from you and your interpretation of real life through your imagination and art, not by copying someone else's style. The more you practice, the better you get! ***Ciao!*** (W)

Darick Robertson got his foot in the door with DC/Vertigo's Transmetropolitan *and also has significant runs on Marvel's* Wolverine *and* Nightcrawler.

SULTRY WOMEN BY ADAM HUGHES (AND FRIENDS)



Well, hello! An aspiring young artist, I see! Do you think you've got it? Have you the mutant ability to make your heroines sultry?

My name is Wanda, and this is my friend Janet. If anyone can help you find an answer, it should be us! We can't teach you everything, but perhaps we can open a door or two for you that will send you off on your own personal journey into a much bigger world...

My only request is that you use what you've learned here wisely. I fear there are more artists out there who merely wish to pander to the masses than those who wish to create very attractive, yet very three-dimensional and believable feminine comic book characters. Remember—with great power comes great responsibility! I believe I read that somewhere...



DEFINITIONS

Let's see...the *Webster's New World Dictionary* here in the library at Avengers Mansion describes sultry as "oppressively hot and moist."



Here we go: The second definition is "hot or inflamed, as with passion or lust." Well, now! I think that's what the *Wizard* boys invited us here to discuss. Wouldn't you agree?

PRO TIPS

NO ANIME ALLOWED

"Stop watching and mimicking Japanese anime. *Pokémon* won't get you a job at Marvel or DC. They see too much of that!" —Alex Maleev, *Daredevil*

MARVEL, SCARLET WITCH, WASP ™ & © 2007 MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PHOTO: JIM GUND.

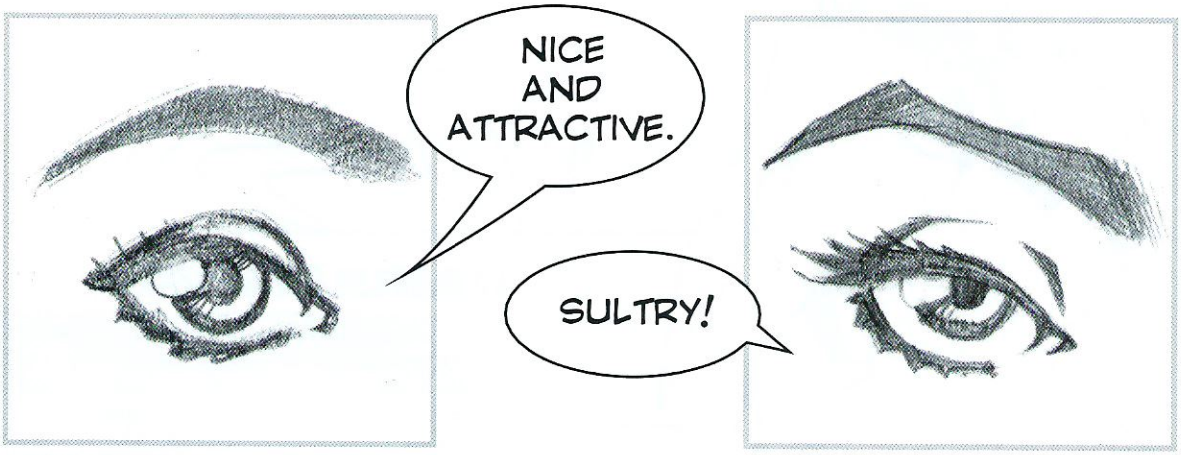


The problem is that, like art or music, it all sounds rather subjective, doesn't it? What you find sultry is probably very far afield from what I find as such. I'm sure none of you find androids attractive, do you!

I believe the most important aspect of sultriness I can impart to you—before we get to a few universal tips—is that it really has nothing to do with how a character looks! That's right. How a woman looks is quite often the least important ingredient in her witch's brew of sultriness. That's because sultriness is a character trait. It comes from within. It's an aspect of personality, not appearance. If your character isn't sultry at heart, no amount of lipstick and cleavage will change that!

Also, do me a kindness and please remember not to make all your female characters sultry. I know it's tempting, but if every lady in your comic is a passionate, lusty bad girl, well then, not one among them will stand out...will they? Of course not!

Well now, I could spend all day talking and fill this entire lesson with a lot of theory, but that's not what you ripped open this book for, is it? I shall assume that you already know how to draw a woman, and are ready for a few bits of advice that seem to work for virtually everyone.

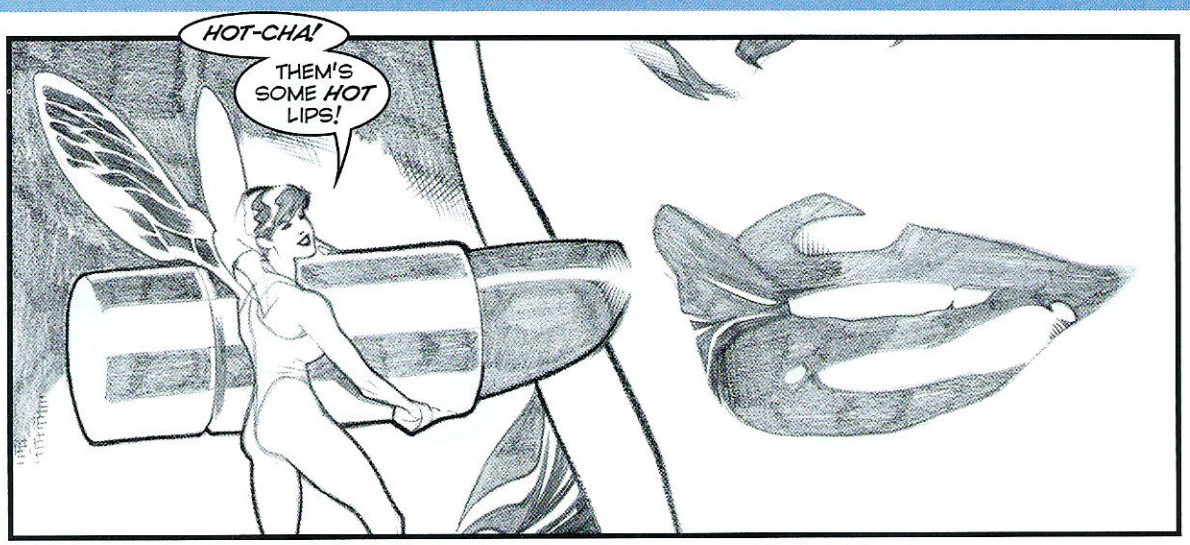


FACE IT

When drawing faces, try not to over-render. Too many lines clutter up a lady's face, and can even be mistaken for wrinkles.

Practice accentuating the eyebrows, eyelashes and lips, while de-emphasizing the features which can make a woman seem too harsh—like cheekbones and noses. Thicker, fuller eyebrows can really add to a sultry expression, especially when they have a slight arch to them. If you draw the lid covering the top part of the eye, it can heighten an already sultry expression!

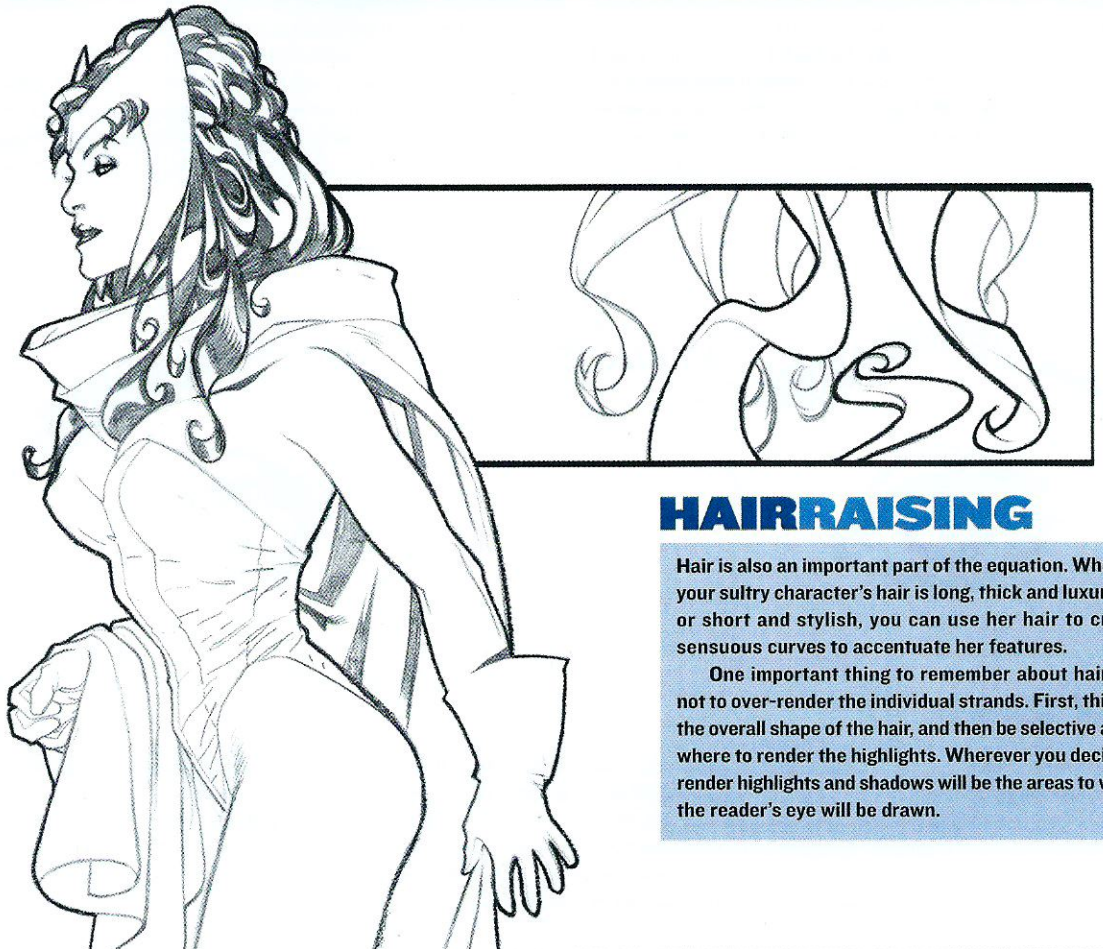
This won't help in panel-to-panel continuity, but it works wonderfully on covers: eye contact! When a reader feels that the lady on the comic is looking at him and no one else in the shop, it works wonders!



PUCKER UP

There are many different ways to draw lips, but one tried-and-true way to give them a sensuous look is to draw them black, with little highlights on the top and bottom lips. This makes them seem deep and moist, which I've been told is very sultry!

Thank you, Janet, for draining the last bit of austerity out of the proceedings. It is important to note, however, that less really is more when trying to render a truly sultry expression. Even if your favorite artist does it, I heartily recommend that you abstain from over-rendering a face. You won't become better by drawing one face for hours and hours; try spending those hours drawing as many faces as possible. Remember, you have to fail at something quite a few times before you can start to succeed at it.



HAIR RAISING

Hair is also an important part of the equation. Whether your sultry character's hair is long, thick and luxurious, or short and stylish, you can use her hair to create sensuous curves to accentuate her features.

One important thing to remember about hair: Try not to over-render the individual strands. First, think of the overall shape of the hair, and then be selective about where to render the highlights. Wherever you decide to render highlights and shadows will be the areas to which the reader's eye will be drawn.





BODY TALK

If you practice enough, you'll notice that almost all the lines you use to draw a sultry woman are smooth, soft and curvaceous. Try not to use many hard angles, whether drawing facial features, hair or even a pose! When drawing, use lines that curve gently, like the letters "S" or "C." Try it...not everyone can make it work. Can you?

Speaking of poses, I suppose we ought to at least address the issue, even though we're running out of space rather quickly!

Try not to overpose your characters. As we stated earlier, sultriness is a character trait; if your heroine is naturally sultry, then she shouldn't need to strike a pose to get her innate sensuousness across. Practice drawing sultry women in repose, rather than in a forced posture. Remember, a truly sultry lady will be that way naturally, even if no one is around to look at her. Sultriness should never be an act.

CHESTOFTHEBEST

Finally, I feel the need to discuss the...ahem...Zen and Tao of endowments. Many of you may think me a bit of a hypocrite when I tell you that the size of a woman's chest has little to do with a woman's attractiveness, but it is the truest thing I say to you today.

If bigger is truly better...



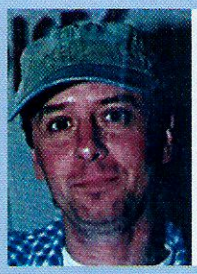


Uhh...with that said, I think we shall take our leave of you. I sincerely hope that you are one of the few who shall grow as an artist, and someday make some magic happen. (Hey, Janet...who drew that for you, anyway?)

The Scarlet Witch and the Wasp are powerful women in the Marvel Universe. Adam Hughes, cover artist for comics such as Top Cow's Tomb Raider *and DC's* Wonder Woman, *had nothing to do with any of this. Honest.*

REALISTIC WOMEN

BY TERRY MOORE



I am a cartoonist, but people tell me the female characters in my book, *Strangers in Paradise*, look like real women. So, what's that all about, huh? I mean, it can't be my skillful use of light and shadow, paints, textures or anatomical detail, because...well, I don't do that.

I try to infuse the proper scale, body language and facial expressions into my characters. I believe these are basic principles every artist should strive for when they sit down to draw. Alex Raymond, Mike Allred, Paul Smith, Paul Pope, Jeff Smith...all these artists work in relative scale with dynamic use of body language and expressive faces to make their stories come alive.

So let's take a minute to look into this a little closer, okay? And again, since my stories center on women, I'll keep my focus on the female form.



BIGGER THANLIFE

Let's start with the obvious. Female heroes look cool on paper, but they are deliberately exaggerated in an effort to make them more dynamic. That's fine; it's like the muscle thing with men. But you can reach a point where it's hard to relate. If you take the average woman and stand her next to the typical modern heroine, the differences would be pretty obvious.

PRO TIPS

KNOW-IT-ALL

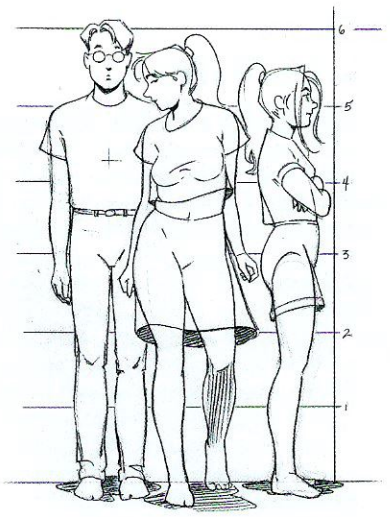
"You have to be good at drawing *everything*. I used to copy pictures that I liked from magazines: women talking on the phone, a guy eating dinner, a plaza with a piano in the middle—just things that struck my eye and seemed like a challenge. I never knew that I would eventually utilize that experience much more than every superhero pose I worked up. The buildings are much harder to draw than Spider-Man is." —Darick Robertson, *Nightcrawler*

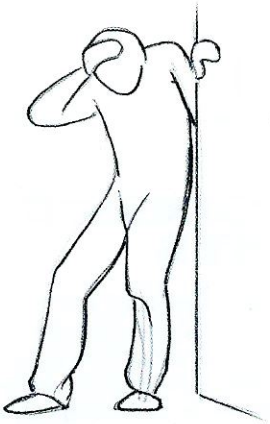
STRANGERS IN PARADISE™ & © TERRY MOORE

LINEUPANDDOWN

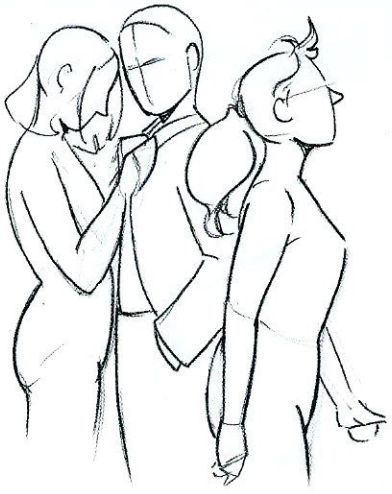
Think about how tall your female characters are supposed to be. Don't make them all the same height, because nature doesn't work that way. Vary the heights on your characters and you'll find it helps you, and the reader, relate to them a little easier.

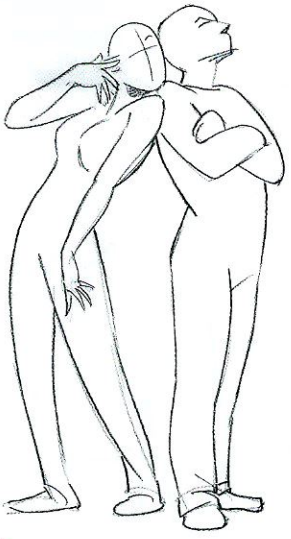
For instance, look at the police lineup we have to the right. You can see that David is 6' tall, Francine is about 5'8", and for absolutely no reason whatsoever, Katchoo is approximately 5'4". Be sure to keep their individual heights in mind when drawing them together and adjust appropriately, depending on what kind of shoes they are wearing. Details like that count.













MAKETHEMSING

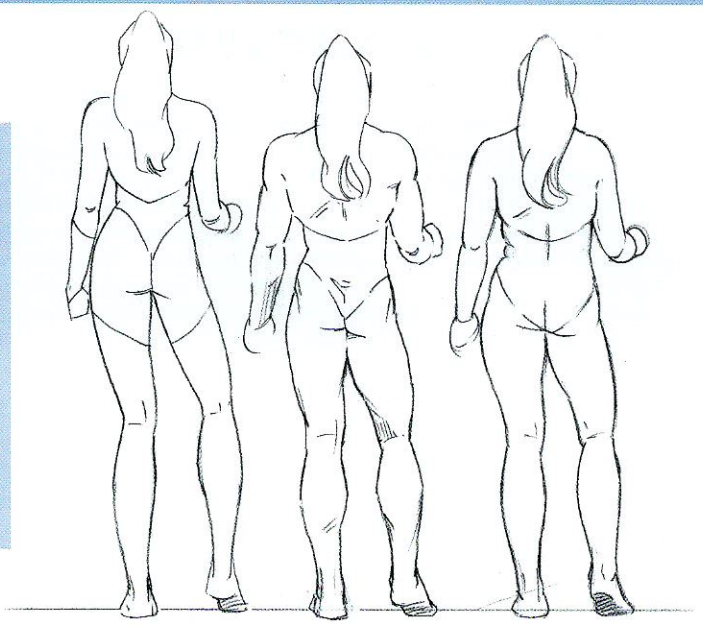
Once I have the basic form of my character in mind, I go back to my cartooning/animation training to get the pose. That's because in both fields, the priority is body language. Cartoonists don't care about anatomical realism—they want the pose to SING! But even superhero art is laid out in cartoony body language before any thought is given to things like muscles or uniforms. Why? Because it gives you the outline of where to put those things.

Look at the examples I've done here. Notice how they convey the moment and attitude of the characters—like devastation, seduction, coyness, arguing, etc.—without any details. That's how important body language is. I've done half my figure work in just a few quick lines. That means a lot when you're trying to do 80 zillion pages a day!

BODY BUILDING

It seems like such a mundane thing to say, but if you want your women characters to look real, then draw real women. Don't just draw an outline; think about things like flesh and bones. You're no different than a sculptor, shaping your figures on paper.

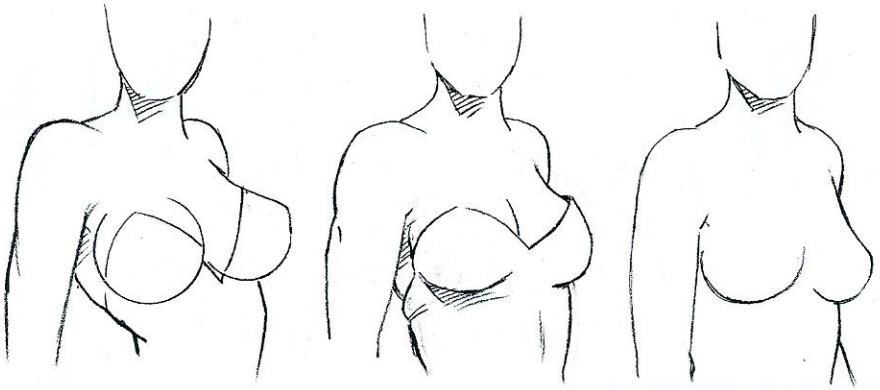
Look at this illustration of three women. The figure on the left is the female hero, as the artist typically draws her. The figure in the middle is what she would probably look like in real life. I mean, if you can lift tanks and punch through buildings, then you're going to have some meat on you, right? But look at the figure on the right. That's what the average woman would look like in the same costume. (And believe me, she's not too happy about wearing it! Sorry, Francine!)





IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS

The figure on the left is a common pose in hero art, but it is also the most criticized. Why? Well, putting the exotic dancer pose aside, it's obvious that the forces of nature don't apply to this body—as opposed to the figure on the right, which displays muscle mass, room for internal organs, a working spinal column and gravitational effects. Let's be realistic; the instant that female hero raises her arms and straightens up, she's going to find herself in a very embarrassing predicament.

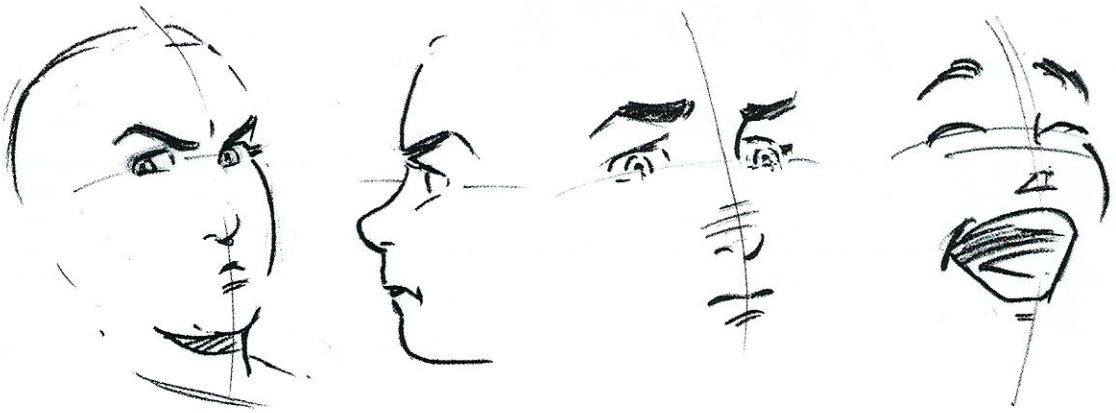


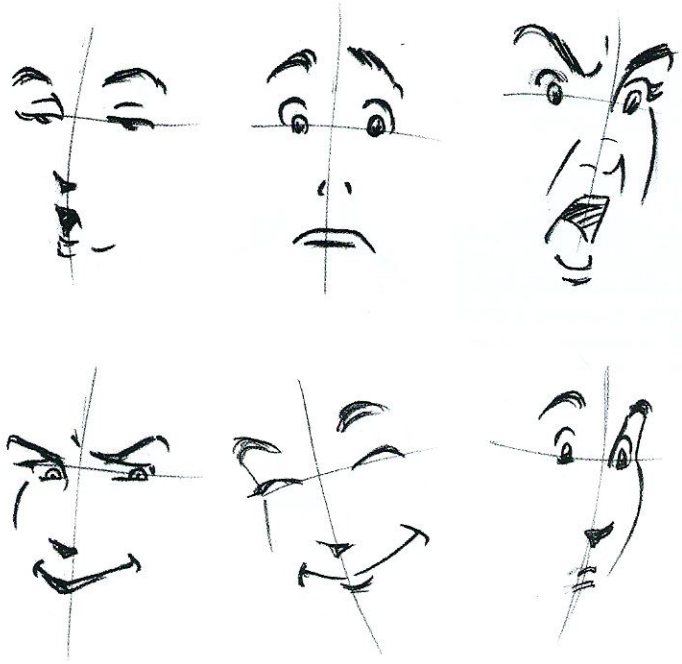
GRAVITY WORKS

Gravity. Now, that's a big deal for the artist and the female form. Let me show you how important gravity is to your figure.

Observe: The torso on the left is our hero, the center drawing is a more realistic example of a female form wearing the same suit, and on the right we see the same realistic form, unrestrained. This is how the female body is made. The bust is soft; it reacts to things like gravity and tight clothes. It really helps to understand this and incorporate it into your drawings, because the reader also possesses this knowledge, and these details make all the difference in your character's plausibility.

Remember, the female figure isn't a skinny teenage boy with tennis balls in his shirt, so don't draw it that way.





BEEXPRESSIVE

After you've established your pose and figure, you're ready to fill in the details, beginning with the face. Before I tell you about creating expressions, I have to mention a common mistake, one even I do every day. You start off with one eye, finish it, move to the other eye, make it match, then put in the nose and mouth, and notice they make the left eye look a little high. So then you redo the left eye for about 20 minutes, but you can't get it perfect, so you try changing the right one instead, and then give up and draw the head in a different position. If that sounds familiar, then you already know what I'm going to say next and I'm sorry, but I've got to say it...*Don't detail the face until you've laid it out!* It's the rule that made your figure look better; it will do the same for your face as well.

An expression is captured in a few quick lines, just like the body language. Look at the examples I've drawn here. You don't need the head, hair, ears or body to convey the expression. It's all in the eyes, nose and mouth, isn't it? Also, see the range of motion in the features? Don't be afraid to stretch your character's face to get the expression you need. That's how nature does it.

FUNNYFACE

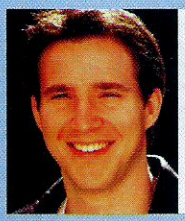


If you try drawing the face with one finished detail after another, you'll end up with the infamous Asymmetrical Face, like the one above (on the left). Looks unprofessional, doesn't it? But why? Sure, it has all the proper rendering techniques, but the drawing itself is bad. The features are misaligned, and the face lacks personality and expression. I was too busy trying to get the eyelashes and hair shading right. Compare that to the head on the right, which was very quickly done. I used only a few lines, but it's actually a much better drawing. The face is laid out correctly, and the expression is locked in before you've wasted any time detailing (re: inking) a bad drawing.

And there you have it. I guess the trick to drawing realistic women is to know what real women look like. If this is your artistic goal, then your homework is obvious: Go look at some real women. And don't expect anyone to feel sorry for you! But, whatever you do, please don't try to learn by drawing the women in men's magazines or Victoria's Secret catalogs. Normal women don't look like that, and besides, who wants to draw a character made of Slim-Fast and silicone?

Terry Moore draws two of the strongest female leads in the business, Francine and Katchoo from his creator-owned series Strangers in Paradise.

SEX APPEAL BY MICHAEL TURNER



Hello, everybody! Michael Turner here, and I'm excited to talk to you about one of my favorite three-letter words...art! More specifically, though, I'll be showing you how to better utilize your artwork to help convey another favorable subject of mine—sex appeal. Sex appeal can be found in almost every aspect of life, but when I think sex appeal, the word sensuality springs to mind. In fact, I like to think of it more as "sensual appeal" than sex appeal. To me, sensuality can be much more elegant and actually help exude better sex appeal in your art. Let's begin with a few layouts and I'll show you what I mean!

THELAYOFTHELAND

A good layout is the most important factor in prepping your art page. In terms of sex appeal, doing several layouts will help you envision what you want your piece to look like, and what you'd like to have conveyed to the reader. In this first layout (**Figure A**), it's the body positioning that makes this piece so appealing. The folded limbs, curves of the body and relaxed demeanor are more inviting and keep the piece from being too over the top or stiff. By focusing on the female form itself and not just a woman's assets, you can make a very sensual and sexy piece of art.

What you don't necessarily see can sometimes be more exciting. By leaving it up to the imagination, the old saying "less is more" can come into play. Now I'm not just talking about fewer clothes, mind you (even though occasionally, that's worked for me in the past!), but less revealing in terms of what you show of the actual body. As **Figure B** illustrates, by turning the back slightly and having most of her lower body submerged, you have to wonder what else lies beneath the water!

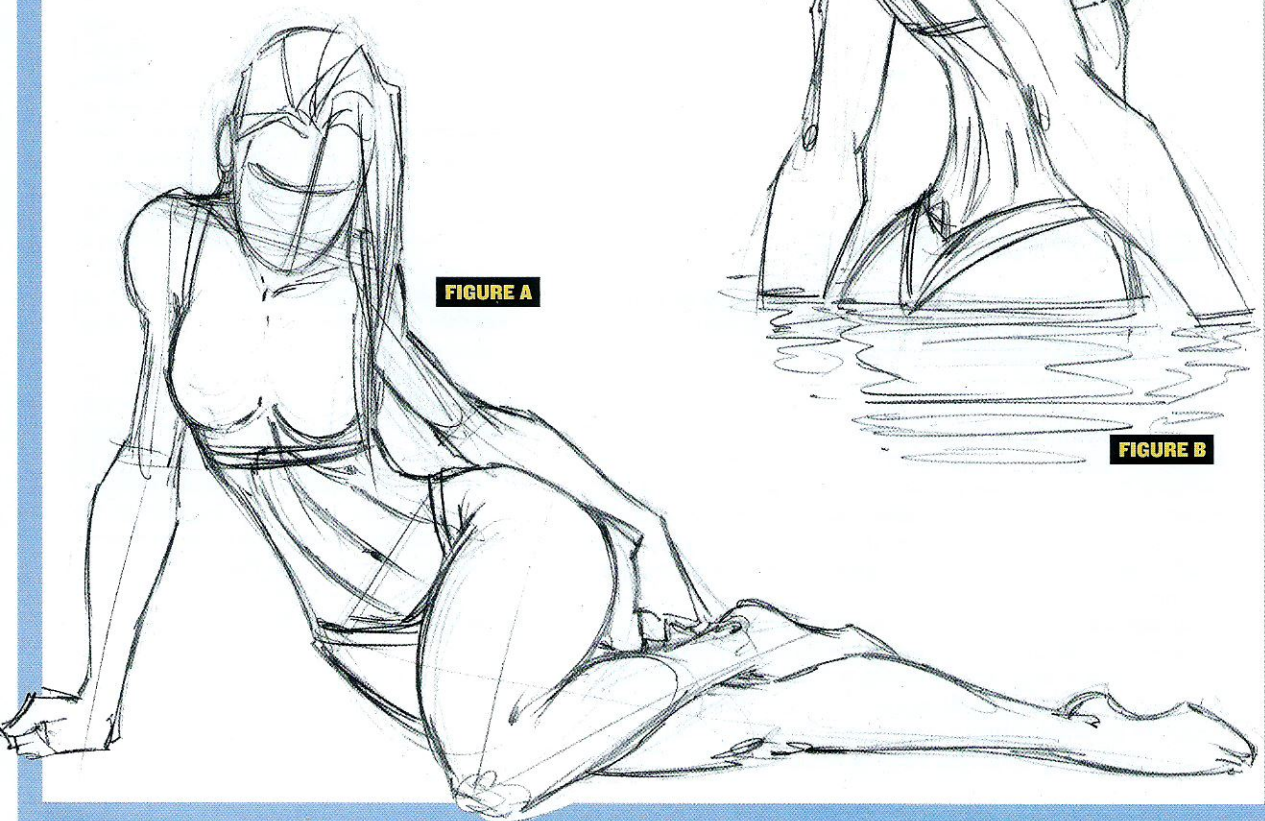


FIGURE A

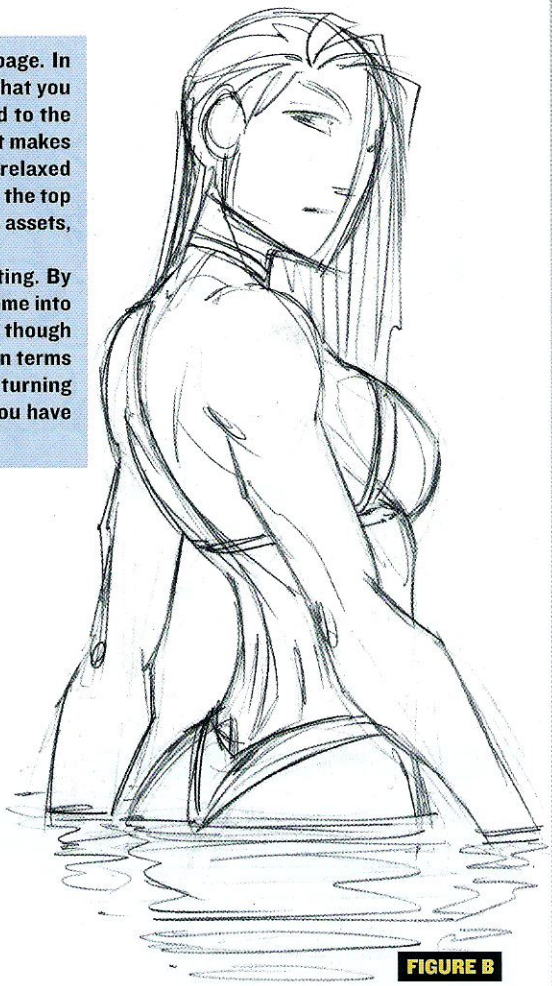
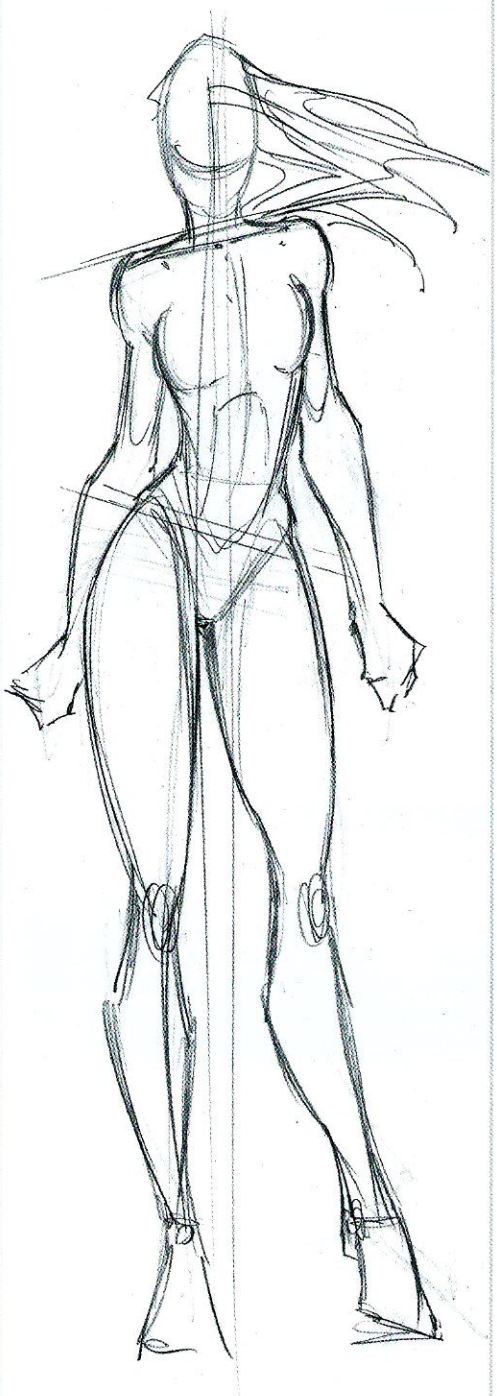


FIGURE B

ASPEN, GRACE ™ & © ASPEN MLT, INC. MYSTIQUE ™ & © 2007 MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. PHOTO: PAUL SCHIRALDI.



The way a woman stands can make or break a sexy pose. Here we have the layout portraying her in a more sassy, aggressive type of stance. The shoulders are tilted opposite of the hips, but it's not overly emphasizing the curves of her body. Whether or not you're going for an action-oriented pose or a shot out of *Playboy*, make sure to keep your gestures and body language in relation to the mood of the story.

FACEFRONT

What's a great body without a pretty face? Expression is the key to communication and getting your point across to the reader. Girls don't have to look overly aggressive or angry to be sexy. Cute can be very sexy as well because it exudes a more playful attitude and slight vulnerability (**Figure C**).



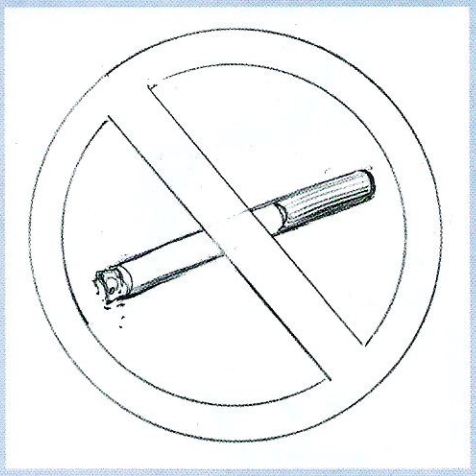
FIGURE C

FIGURE D

This is my "just woke up and I'm happy to see you" piece (**Figure D**). The look over the shoulder, soft eyes, sly smile and relaxed demeanor all help to elicit an emotion. Add that little bit of hair in front of the face and you've got a great piece that just exudes sex appeal without even trying.

SEXAPPEAL

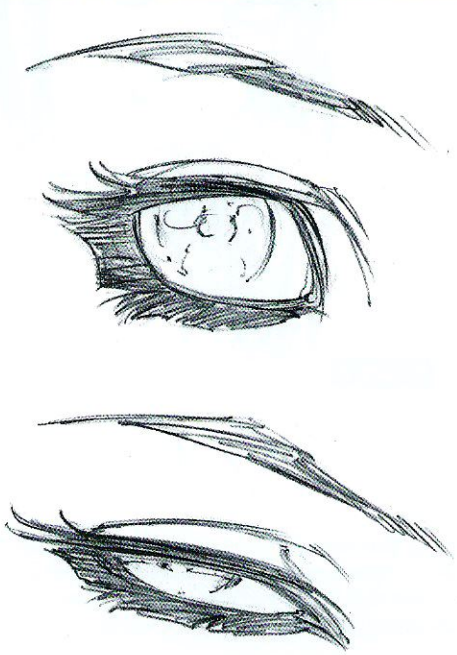
Playing hard to get can also be sexy. Here, she's giving you the attitude that you can't always have what you want. Trying to obtain something that seems unobtainable can definitely exude quite a lot of sex appeal. Sometimes people have these "bad attitude"-type girls smoking. To me, it's rather unattractive and not very sexy. It's just my opinion, but smoking is not something I use to help portray sexy women.





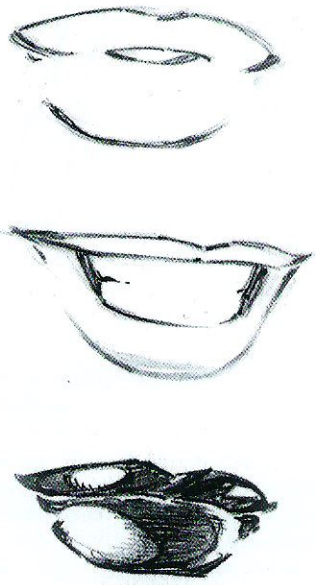
THEEYESHAVEIT

The eyes may be the windows to the soul, but they also lend a great deal to how alluring your illustration of women can be. The top picture is the more regular-drawn eye. It's open and bright, but doesn't lend too much to sex appeal. By closing the eyelid a bit, you've now added a bit of mystery. Change the eyebrow just a bit and elongate the eyelashes and you've got yourself instant sex appeal.



LIPSERVICE

Here are a few different versions of lips to reference. Full lips are very sexy and probably why people get collagen implants. Anyway, I'm more of the natural lip color type versus the bright-red lipstick. But if a woman is wearing a hot-red dress...red lipstick is perfect. Also, be careful with futuristic colors like blue, because it can look cold and dead. There are several lip shapes that are sexy, but in my opinion, the fuller the better!



LET'SGETWET



It's the subtleties of this piece that make it sexy. By her not looking at the camera, you can see she has her head turned with her neck exposed, which is very sexy to me. You also have the curve of her body, but it's not so contorted that it looks out of proportion. It has more of a natural and realistic curvature to it. Plus, she's covered a bit by the waterfall that leaves that imagination going to work again!

PRO TIPS

STYLE COUNSEL

"When I first started, I thought I had no style. I was so conscious of it that I used to try and 'manufacture' one. Then I found out, years later, that people were recognizing my stuff even though I didn't think it was recognizable!" —John Romita Sr., *Amazing Spider-Man*

BLUEANGEL

Even a completely blue female with stuff all over her body can be very sexy. Mystique is one of my favorite characters because her natural form is very appealing. Even with all the action scenes she had in the "X-Men" movies, there were never any blatant shots portraying her body in any type of gratuitous way. Plus, Mystique is a very strong female presence; she's tough and confident. That type of personality exudes more sex appeal than almost any other.

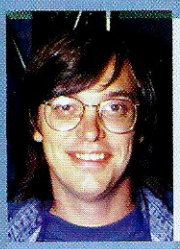


DON'T FEEL like you need to draw a butt shot on every page to help portray sex appeal. Try to keep things more subtle by focusing on different aspects of the entire body. Keep the confidence. That's a very sexy attribute that can work wonders in your artwork and keep away those unwanted, too gratuitous-type reactions. Also, make sure to always practice, practice and then practice a bit more. Until next time, take it easy!

Michael Turner (artist of DC's Superman/Batman *and Aspen's* Soulfire*) has never appeared in* Playboy*, but we still think he exudes sex appeal. And he doesn't smoke.*

TEENS & CHILDREN

BY TOM GRUMMETT



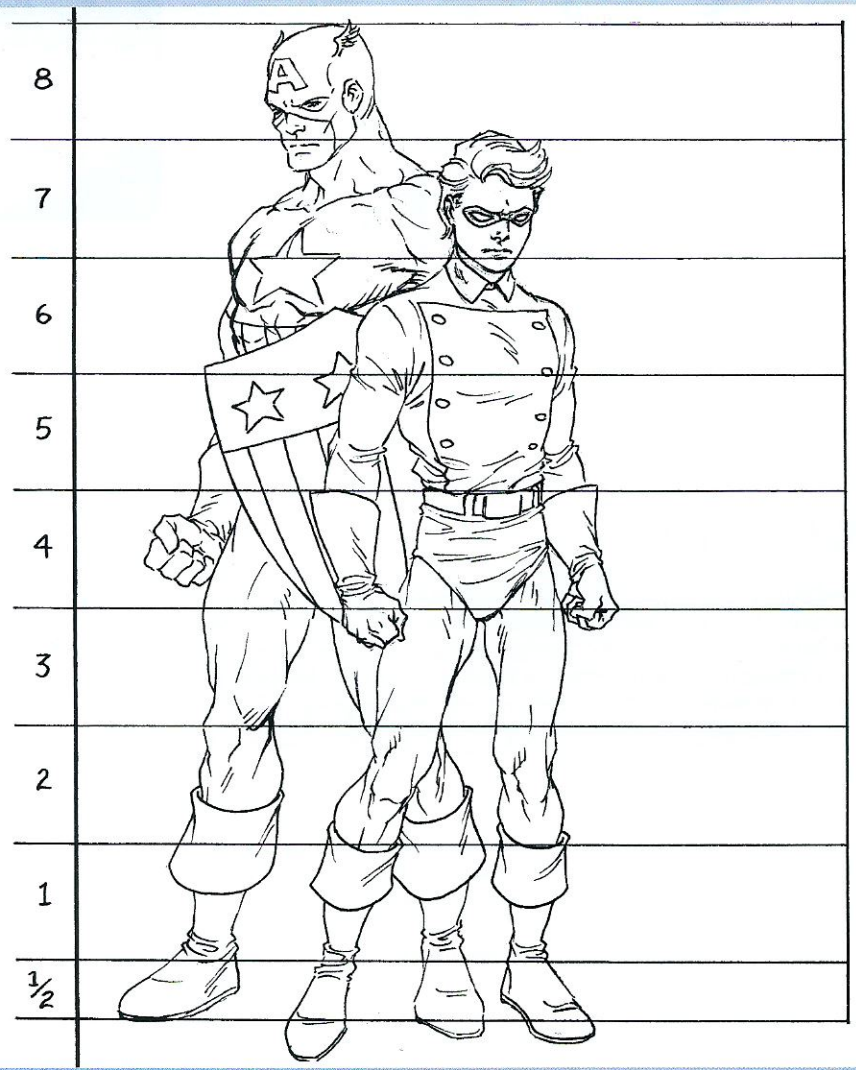
I've been told that a number of you are interested in drawing teenagers and children, and I've been invited to share some of the tricks and techniques I use. Now to be brutally honest, I'm no expert on the subject—many of the techniques I use were developed by trial and error, observation and tons of practice. As any artist will tell you, the study of art and drawing is an ongoing learning process.

But what I hope to do, in this limited space, is provide you with a basic approach to drawing teens and kids and help you avoid some pitfalls along the way. I'm going on the assumption that you're already familiar with drawing the male and female "heroic" figure. (If you're not, you better get crackin' on the previous lessons!) So if everyone's ready, let's roll up our sleeves and get started.

GUYSARESCRAWNY

To illustrate the contrast between the heroic figure and the teen figure, let's take a look at Captain America and Bucky.

As you can see, Captain America, like most "heroic" figures, is about 8 1/2 heads tall in stature. In comparison, Bucky stands about 7 heads tall. This doesn't simply make Bucky shorter than Cap—proportionally, I've made Bucky's head larger in relation to the rest of his body. What we're aiming for is to visually signal to the reader that our teen character is younger, and therefore, less developed than his adult counterpart. We have to do more than just scale down adult proportions, or all we'd have is a shorter adult. As you can see, Bucky isn't built as powerfully as Cap: He's got narrower shoulders, a more compact torso, and leaner arms and legs. To emphasize Bucky's youth, we want to tone down the powerful, muscular superhero build in favor of a lean, yet athletic, frame. We want to believe that Bucky's capable of daring feats, but we don't want him to appear too bulky.



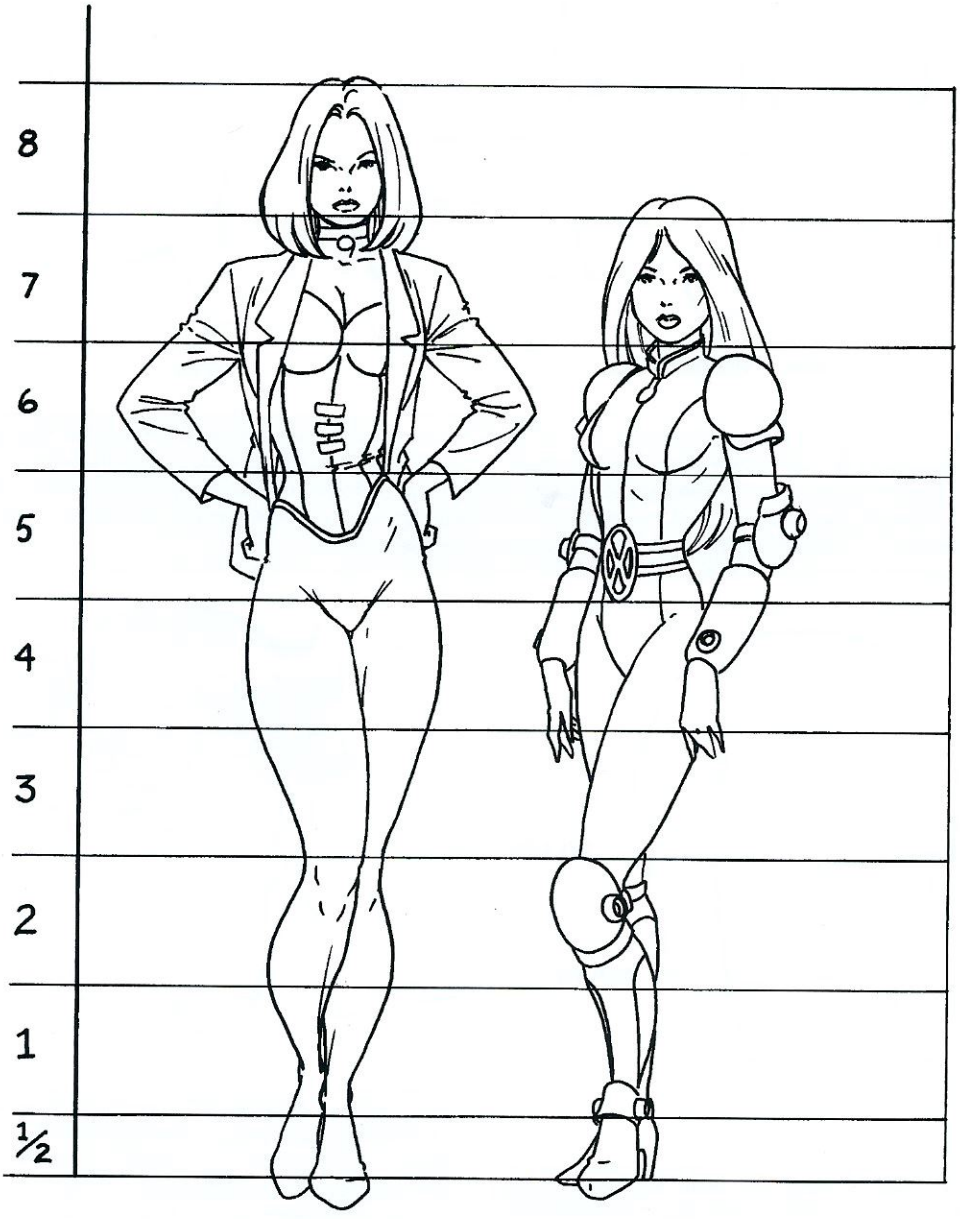
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GIRLSAREMOREMATURE

First, some facts of life. Since girls tend to mature faster than boys, they are more fully developed by the age of 13 to 16, while boys don't begin to gain adult characteristics until their mid-to-late teens. Therefore, for drawing purposes, a 16-year-old female will differ only slightly from her adult counterpart, as shown below by the White Queen and her one-time student Husk.

The White Queen stands at 8 1/2 heads tall, contrasting with Husk at 7 heads tall. Again, we want to emphasize Husk's relative youth (without sacrificing her femininity) over the more idealized stature and build of the White Queen. By making Husk shorter, we change her head size to body size proportion.

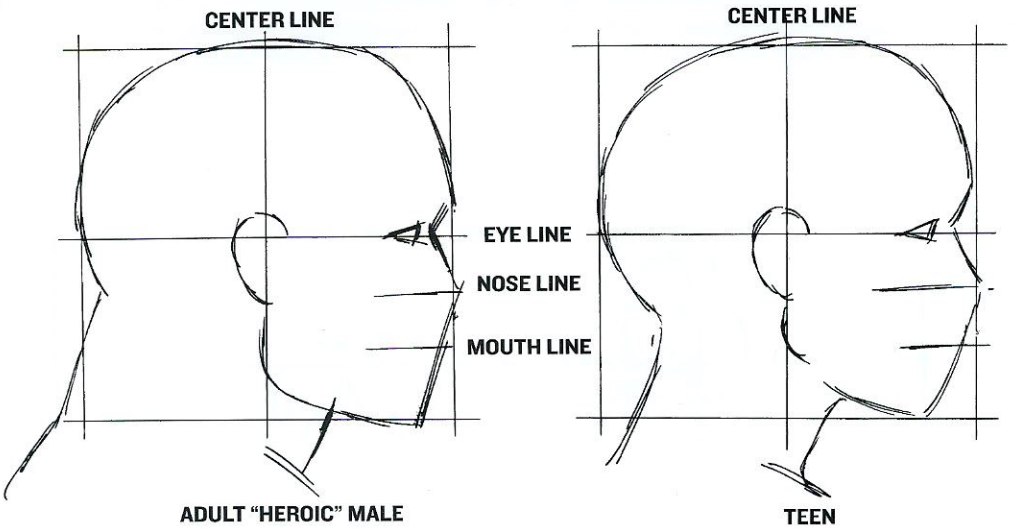
Drawing a convincing teen female is obviously trickier than the teen male, since her overall body proportions aren't markedly different from those of the adult heroic figure version, but there are a few things you can keep in mind. Whenever possible, try not to oversize the breasts—a smaller bustline will create a more youthful look. You can further enhance the character's youth by keeping her figure slimmer and less curvaceous.



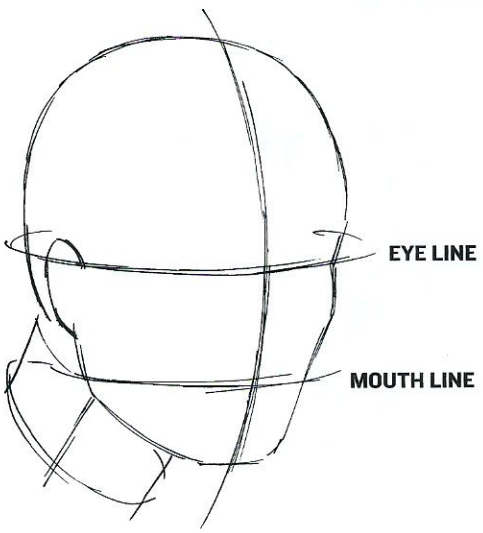
FACEFACTS

The head and face are a critical area of the teen figure. Here's where we really go to work on highlighting the youthful aspects of the character. Oddly enough, what we leave out of the drawing can often be as important as what we put in.

Let's start from the neck and work up, playing around with skull shapes. The human skull will basically fit within a square, and by dividing the square into four equal sections we end up with the eye line and a center line. These lines will help us place the features of the face.



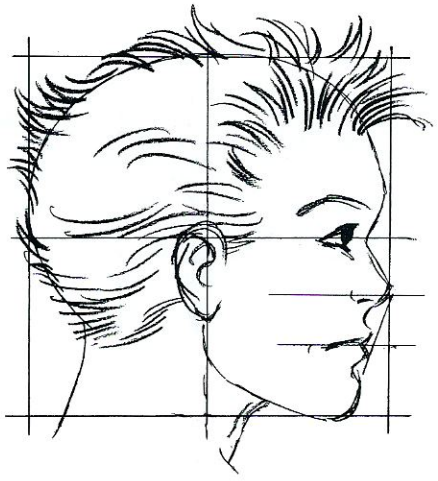
Let's work with these two skulls. The one on the left is a standard heroic male, and the other's a basic teen. The heroic male skull is nothing new: broad, muscular neck, angular features, prominent jaw. The teen skull, however, shows a slimmer neck and rounded profile. You might also notice that the slimmer neckline makes the back of the skull more pronounced. This little variation on the heroic male skull gives us not only a rough framework for drawing a teen male, but also teen and adult females, depending on the features we place upon it.

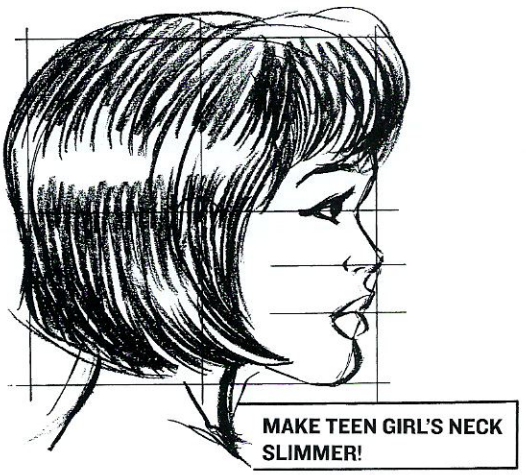


Now we'll work on the face itself. It's probably best to start off with a regular teen who doesn't wear a mask or helmet or anything. We begin with the same skeletal framework we'd use to draw any figure, roughing in the placement of eyes, nose and mouth.



We then begin "fleshing out" the features as we would with an adult figure, keeping in mind we want to portray the character as young. Here it's important not to over-render the features. Lines tend to age a character's face, and over-rendering the contours of the face, particularly around the eyes and mouth, will soon make our character appear too old.





In addition, the few facial contours we do decide are necessary should look softer and more rounded. While a lantern jaw and furrowed brow make a full-grown hero look grim and heroic, they're out of place on a 14-year-old. Simplifying and rounding out the face is key to an adolescent look. Also, make note of the girl's slimmer neck, which helps to accentuate her femininity.







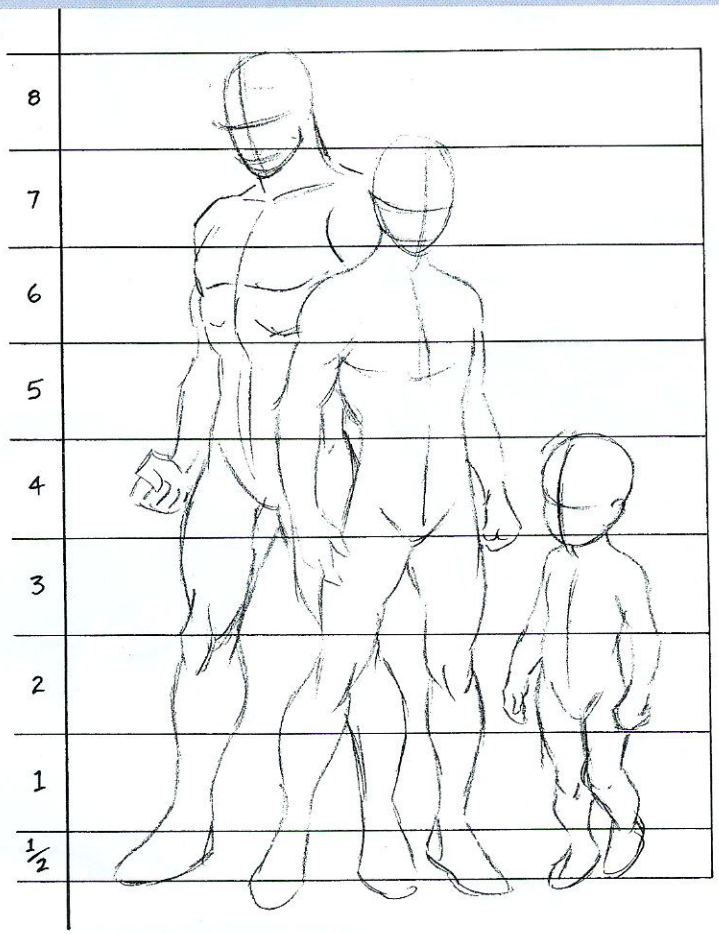
TEENSPIRIT

The true mark of a teenager, however, is exuberance and unrestrained emotion, which can be played out through various facial expressions. I often take the license of exaggerating these expressions (anger, surprise, amusement and so on) to help portray these emotions to a greater and sometimes comic effect. This is what I find most appealing about drawing teen superheroes—I can cut loose a little more without damaging the "heroic image" of a character.

Now that I've shown you the main points of drawing teen superheroes, it's likely that I've raised as many questions as I've answered. But the bottom line to drawing teen heroes (or anything else, for that matter) is to make the character convincing to your reader. This requires experimenting, bending some rules that you've been strictly following, and some tough self-criticism and evaluation of your work. Now on to children...

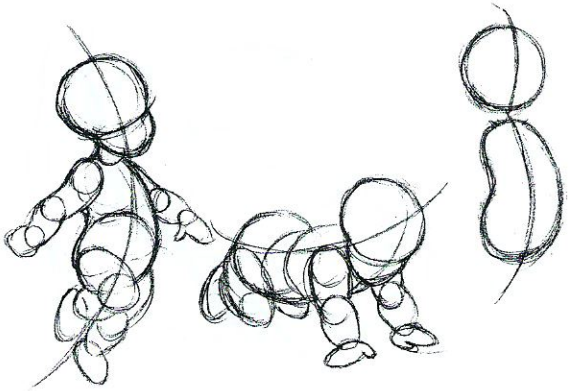
BABYTALK

The key element in drawing the human figure—heroic male or female, teens or children—is the head-to-body size ratio. As we've established, the heroic male/female stands at 8 1/2 heads tall, to emphasize the larger-than-life aspects of a superhero. The teen's stature is roughly 7 to 7 1/2 heads tall, and less powerful and dynamic than its adult counterpart. When drawing children, our aim is to emphasize youth. In many ways the goal of drawing kids is the same as with drawing teens, but we take it further by manipulating the head/body ratio to a greater effect. As you can see in the figure below, by keeping the figure's head the same size as the more adult figures, and reducing the height, we've come up with a figure of more childlike stature. The shoulder width is further narrowed, the torso becomes less angular, and the arms and legs are proportionately shorter than the longer-limbed, more muscular heroic and teen figures. By further changing the proportion of the head to the body's height, we can draw children from infants to preteens.



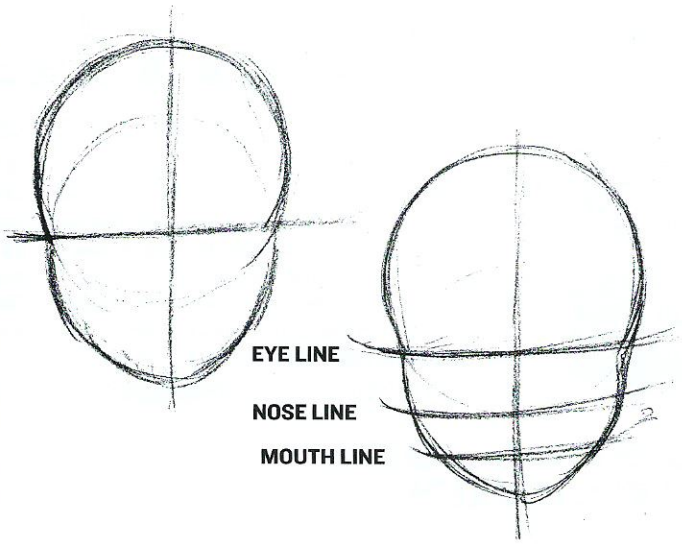
THEINNERCHILD

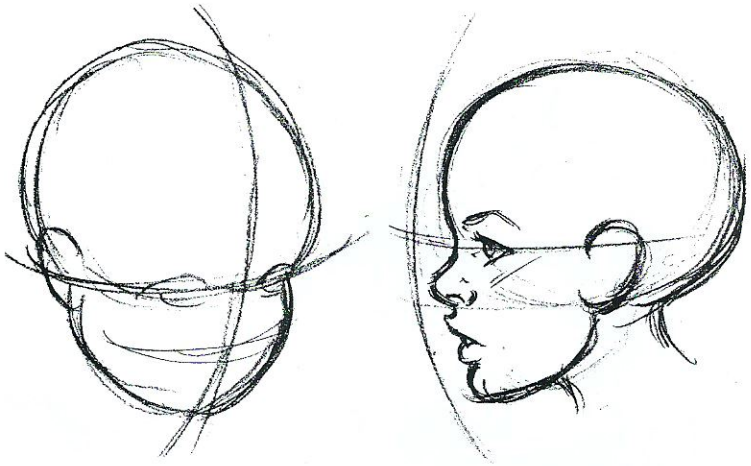
Here's a figure of about 3 1/2 heads tall. While adults and teens are linear and angular, a child's figure is rounder, and made up of a series of circles and curves. These figures are of a toddler's stature, up to about the age of 5. You'll note that these figures are made up of shapes resembling circles and jellybeans. By stretching these shapes out a bit, the figures "grow up" a bit. I'd say that kids from 6 to 12 years of age are in the neighborhood of 5 or 6 heads tall, 4 to 6-year-olds are 3 1/2 to 4 heads tall, toddlers 3 to 3 1/2 heads tall, and infants 3 heads tall. This part is where all the hard work and practice comes in. There's really no better way to work these differences out than by trying out figures at different ratios. And by the way, unlike their mature counterparts, there's no difference between younger boys and girls.



KIDS'STUFF

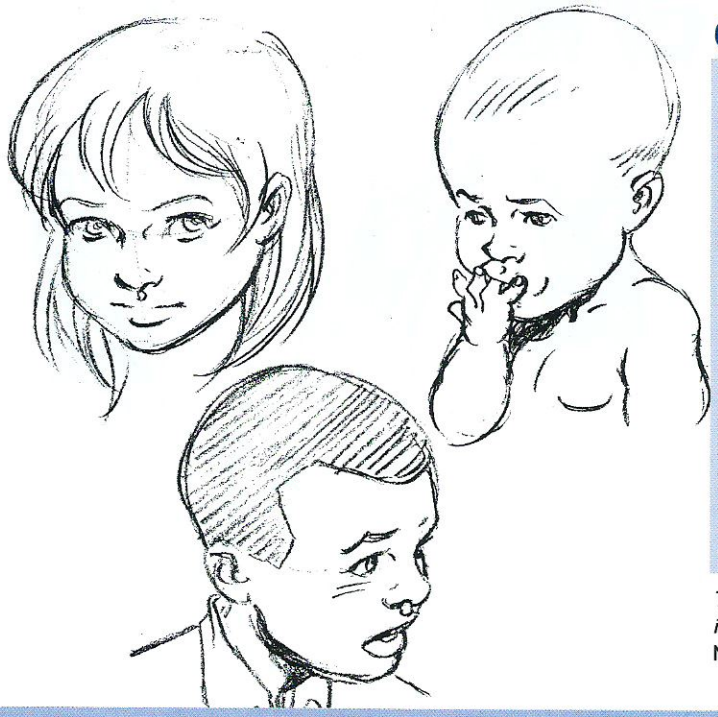
Let's keep working with circles here. When drawing kids, to keep 'em looking young, we keep 'em round. Let's take two circles, one slightly bigger than the other, and superimpose them like this, the larger circle above the smaller. If we stretch them out top to bottom, we'd start to enter the territory of an adult face's proportion, viewed straight on. If we push them closer together, top to bottom, we get a more elfin or childlike shape for the face. Now by bisecting the face with our handy center line and eye line we've drawn our road map for the features. The features of a child will generally take up the lower half of the face, with lots of space above the eye line. I find this helps emphasize once more that our character is quite young.





ROLLWITHIT

We're rarely left to draw anyone exclusively straight on, or in profile. We have to give our character mass and dimension. Like a globe, we can rotate the head, and our map lines will curve on its surface like latitude and longitude lines. This will set out features no matter what the angle. In order to give the skull more shape, I've curved the lower half of the face into more of a heart shape to give some definition to the jaw line.



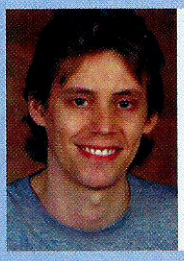
GROWINGUP

Here's where the personality and individuality start to take shape in our character. In the case of children, the face really is an open book. Joy, anger, fear, surprise and all other emotions are clear, and often broad and exaggerated. It's here where we can separate boys from girls, through their hair and dress. Try to keep your lines to a minimum, particularly around the eyes and mouth, and watch out for angular lines in the cheeks and jaw. Nobody will go for a craggy look on a 5-year-old.

Obviously, there's a lot more to drawing children than can be covered in this limited space. The rest is really in your hands. Practice some of the things I've shown you, and feel free to experiment. There's no substitute for hard work and determination...when you've nailed it, you'll know.

Tom Grummett has illustrated every age group imaginable in books like Marvel's Generation X *and* New Thunderbolts *and DC's* Robin.

PROPORTIONS BY DALE KEOWN

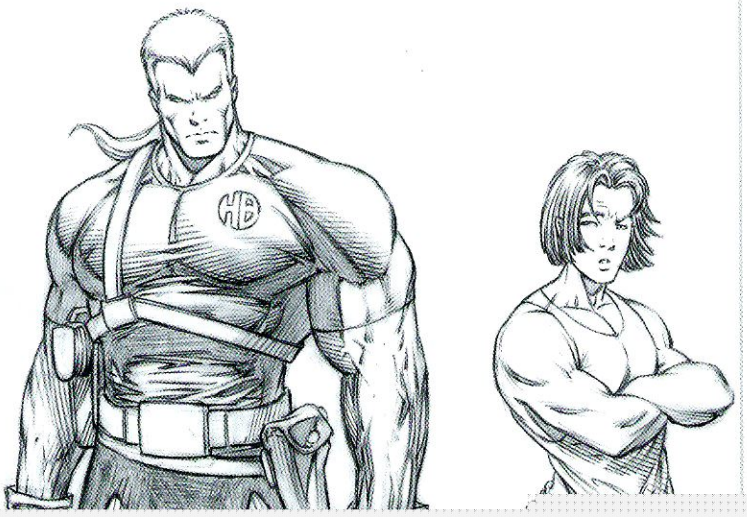


Hey there! In the books I've drawn (*Incredible Hulk, Pitt*), proportions have always played a *big* part. When *Wizard* first approached me to do this piece I was reluctant, though. Y'see, I wasn't sure I'd have enough time and space to do it justice, or even be able to put into words the things I've come to understand about drawing proportions. "Proportion is the relation of one part to another or to the whole with respect to magnitude, quantity or degree." (Yeah, I looked it up!) Anyway, correct proportioning is probably the single most important part of the drawing process. (No pressure or anything!) Instead of giving you a straightforward "how to" approach, I've decided to basically give you a walk-through of my observations. So let's start sizing things up.

A SHOULDER TO CRYON

Here you can see the difference between these two *Incredible Hulk* regulars: Doc Samson, a man of heroic proportions, and Rick Jones, an average-sized guy who keeps in good shape. Rick stands about 5'8" tall and, using his head as measurement, is about 3 1/2 heads wide from shoulder to shoulder. The guy's no slouch and has certainly proven himself in battle. Still, he looks pedestrian standing next to the 6'6" Samson, who's at least five heads wide. Sorry, Rick.

Exaggerating the musculature system, especially the limbs and torso, can add dramatic presence to any superhero.



PIECING TOGETHER ANATOMY

BY JIM BALENT



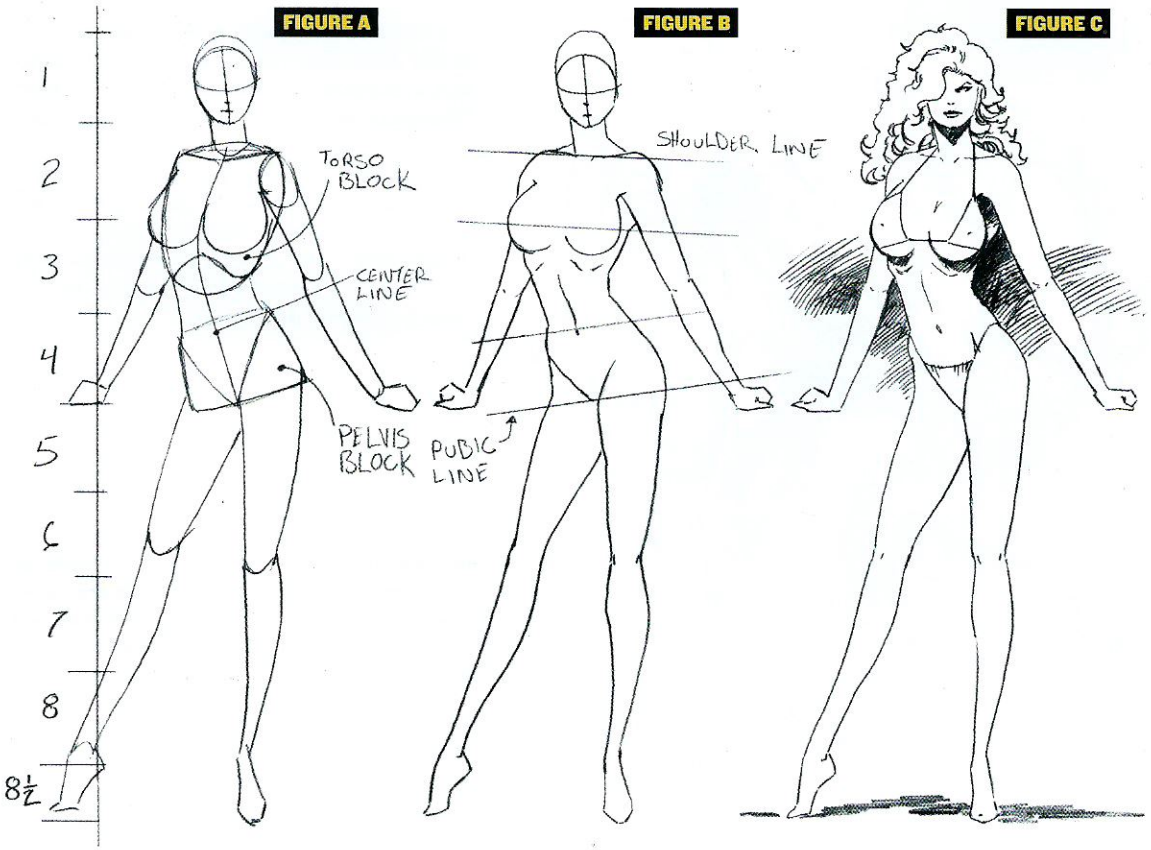
Greetings, fellow mad scientists! Today in our laboratories, we'll be learning how to construct a superheroic woman. Now, I want to state right up front that I am by no means the master of this craft. In fact, we should all learn from a number of masters so that we may hone our own skills. Personally, I've learned a great deal from the works of Frank Thorne (*Red Sonja*) and Bernie Wrightson (*Swamp Thing*), to name just a couple, but you should find and study the work of an artist you enjoy. For more details on the subjects I've covered here, please check out any anatomy book or take a life-drawing class. The best I can do for you here is point you in the right direction. So grab those pencils and let's get started!

BODYBASICS

First, we need a basic blueprint or mannequin (**Figure A**). The standard comic book female is approximately 8 1/2 heads high. Divide a vertical line into eight equal segments. Segment 1 starts at the top of the figure's head, and the bottom of the fourth segment rests on the pubic line. This should almost divide your figure in half. Segments 5 through 8 are your leg lengths, while the last half-segment is your foot length. The two main masses, the torso and pelvis blocks, are positioned on the center line in such a fashion so that our creation will have an hourglass shape and an arch to her posture.

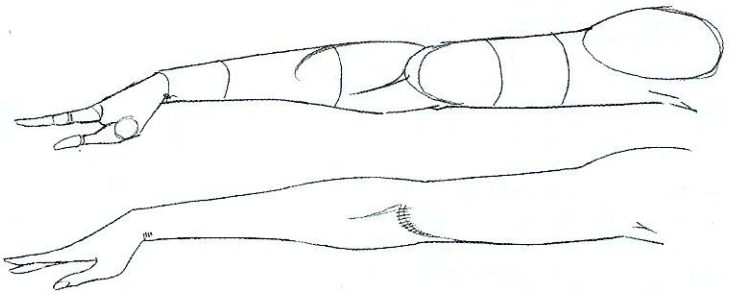
In **Figure B**, it's easier to see the arch that we created by looking at the shoulder line and pubic line—they should be tilting towards each other.

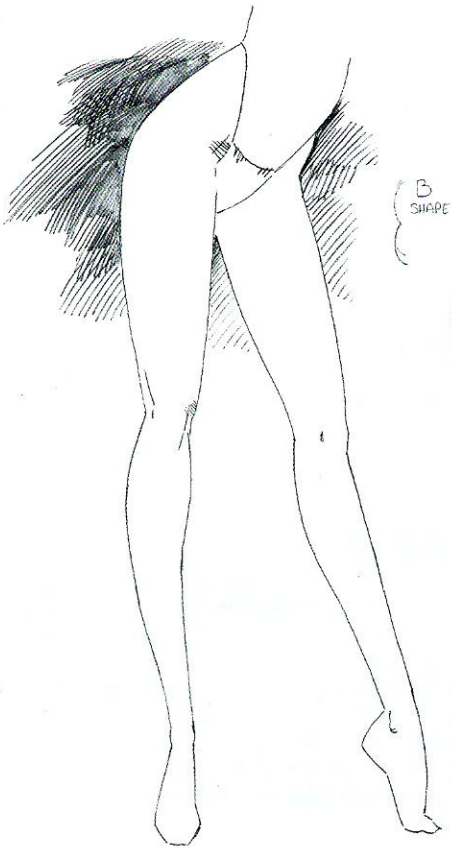
Finally, in **Figure C**, sketch in some hair and a face, and you've got a good idea what your female will look like. Okay, you're right—there are a few steps in between, so to understand Figure C better, let's break it down piece by piece.

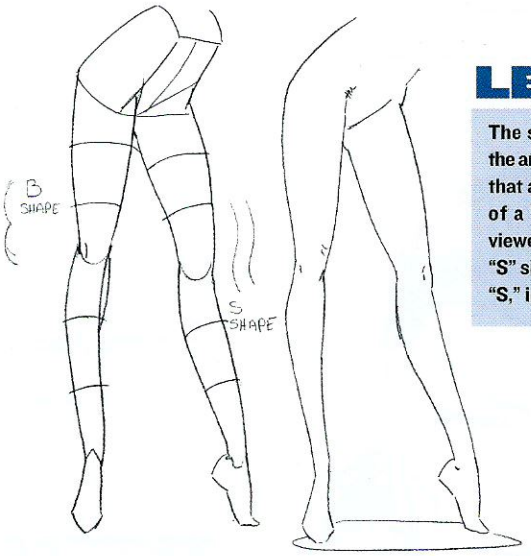


ARMS

Think of the arms as tapered cylinders. Indicate the muscle masses in the arms but try not to overemphasize them, for this may give them a more masculine appearance. (Yes, I know—a woman can have well-defined muscles and still be feminine-looking! So I better not receive any letters from angry female bodybuilders, okay?)





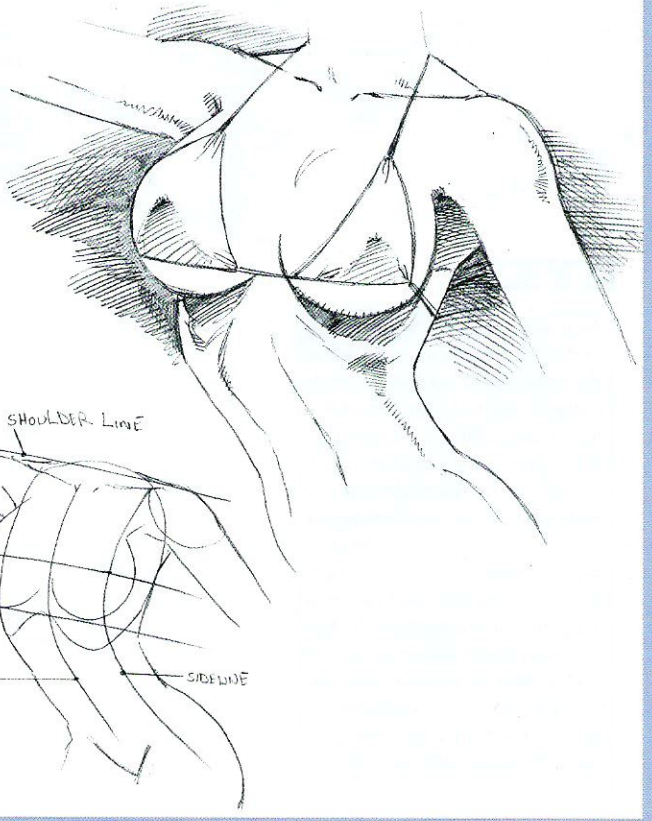


LEGS

The same rules that you used for the arms also apply here. Remember that a leg seen straight on has sort of a "B" shape to it, while a leg viewed from its side has more of an "S" shape (or a backwards "B" and "S," in both cases here).

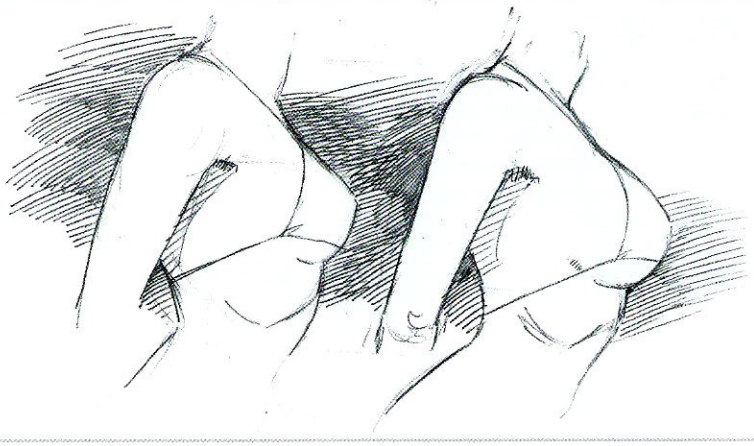
TORSO

Sketch in your rib cage and find your center line. In a 3/4 view (as shown in **Figure A**), you will need to add a side line. This helps orient your form in a three-dimensional surface better. Now draw in the breasts equally on either side of the center line. Remember, your "nipple line" and "breast line" should both parallel your shoulder line.

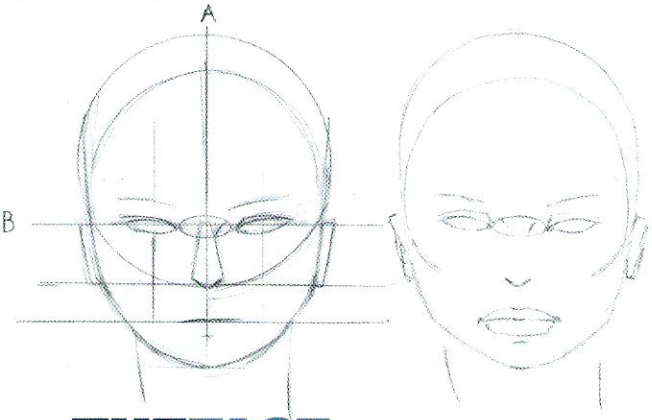


BREASTSIZE

This is a very touchy subject. We all know that breasts come in many different sizes, and one size is no better than the other. Nor do larger breasts on a character make her any less intelligent than characters with smaller breasts. (Hey, I have no breasts to speak of, but I'm still considered a "big boob" by certain people in the industry.) Anyway, design your character with any size you want. The bottom of the breast will line up at mid-biceps or lower on the arm.





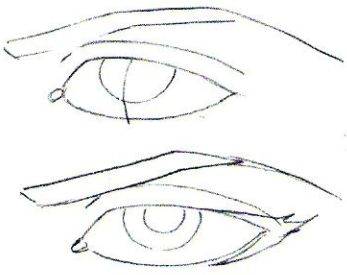


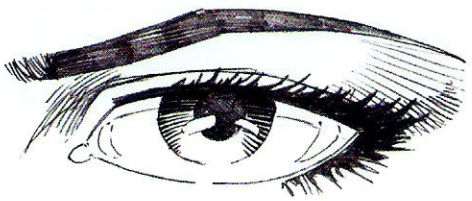
THEFACE

For a straight-on view, the face is divided in half, side to side and top to bottom. Sketch in the eyes on line B; a length of one eye should separate your character's eyes (thus giving her a weird "third eye" look). The nose is placed halfway between the eye line and the chin line. The mouth is found halfway between the nose line and the chin line. And the ears are generally placed right in between the nose and the eye line. (These measurements will vary if you desire a face with different proportions.)

EYES

Two are usually enough. In constructing an eye, be aware of the curvature of the female eye. It is usually more slanted and catlike than a man's. Drawing more of an eyelid will give the face a softer look as well. As for the eyebrows, it's really your choice, because women's eyes are feminine regardless of whether their eyebrows are thick or thin. As you can see, I prefer to draw them on the thinner side. And eyelashes should also be longer and more catlike on a female. Another trick I use is to bunch up the lashes on the corner of the eye, giving it a fuller and more catlike appearance.





HAIR

In drawing hair, keep in mind how light will bounce off the hairstyle. **Figure D** is frizzy, which means the sunlight will catch each individual strand and give the hair that chaotic frenzied look. **Figure E**'s hair lays in a unified manner, and light hitting this hair will act as one unit, giving it a more groomed look.

FIGURE D

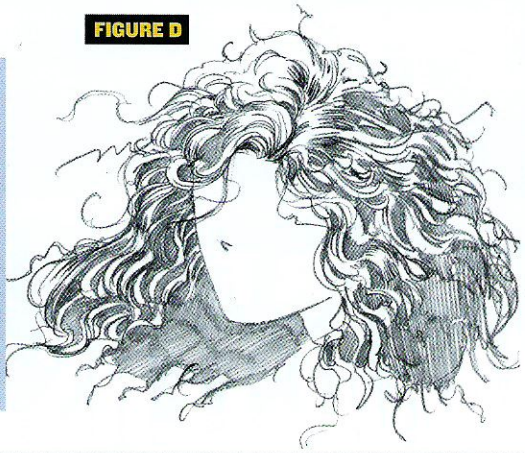
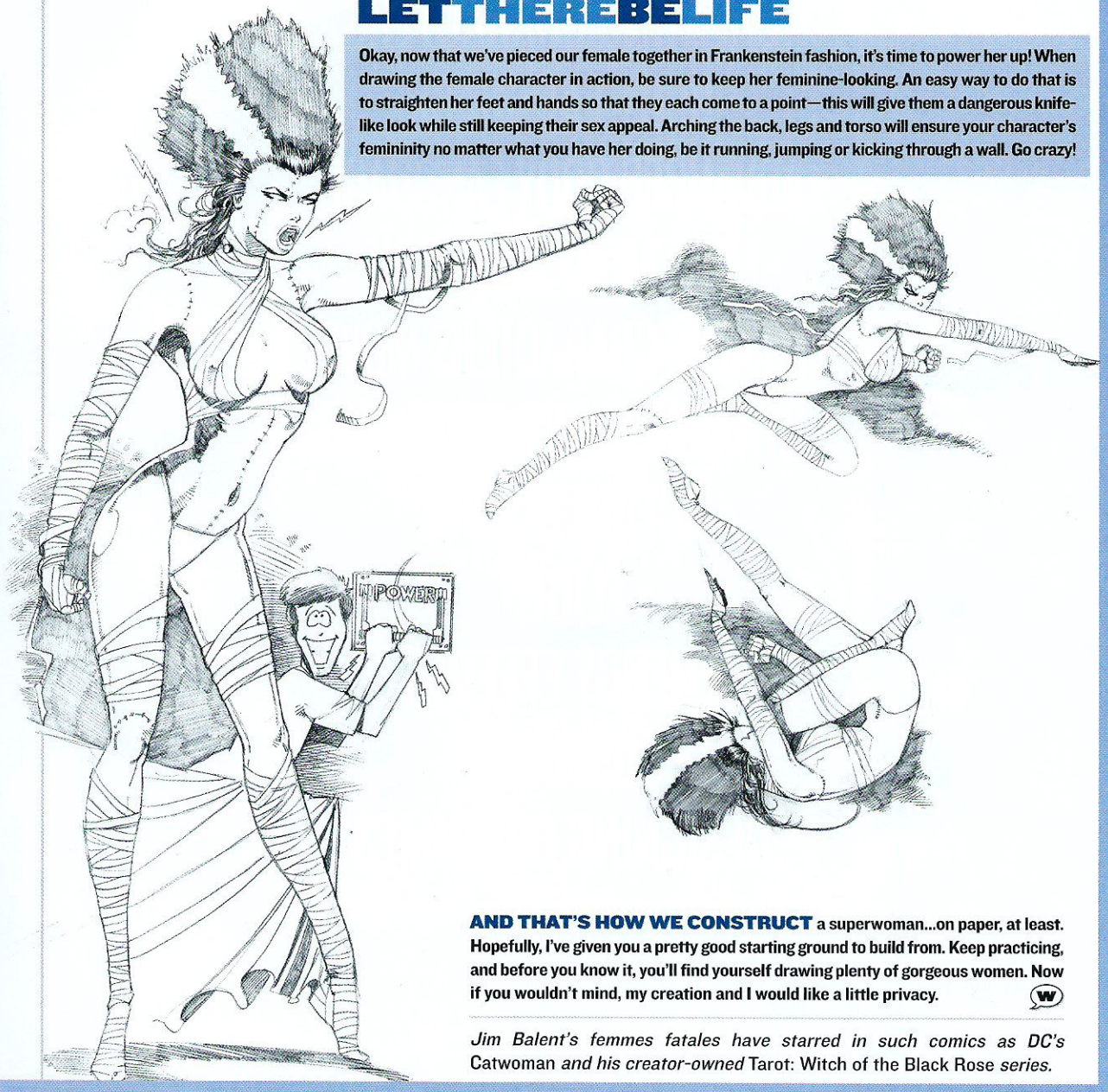


FIGURE E



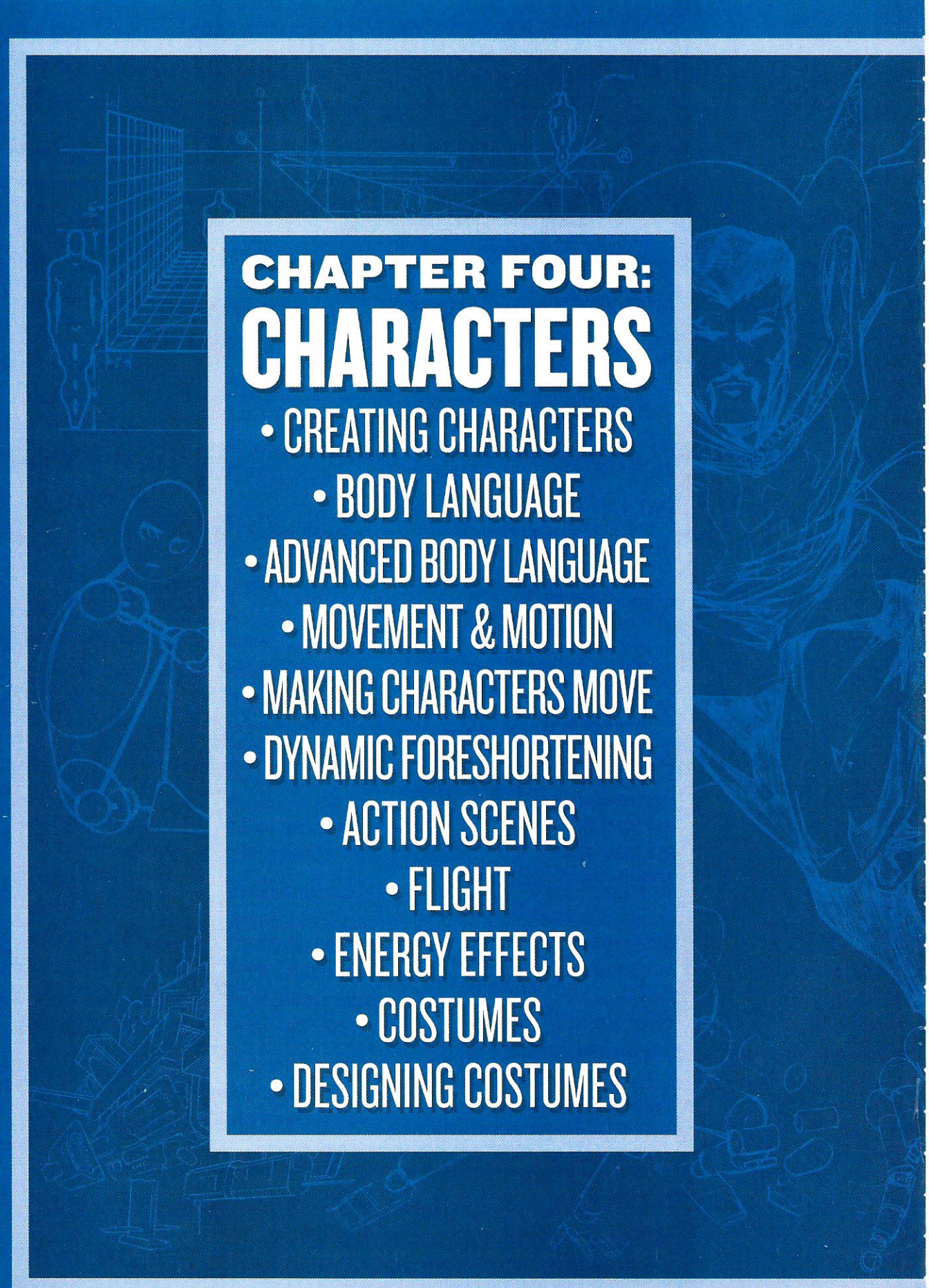
LETTHEREBELIFE

Okay, now that we've pieced our female together in Frankenstein fashion, it's time to power her up! When drawing the female character in action, be sure to keep her feminine-looking. An easy way to do that is to straighten her feet and hands so that they each come to a point—this will give them a dangerous knife-like look while still keeping their sex appeal. Arching the back, legs and torso will ensure your character's femininity no matter what you have her doing, be it running, jumping or kicking through a wall. Go crazy!



AND THAT'S HOW WE CONSTRUCT a superwoman...on paper, at least. Hopefully, I've given you a pretty good starting ground to build from. Keep practicing, and before you know it, you'll find yourself drawing plenty of gorgeous women. Now if you wouldn't mind, my creation and I would like a little privacy.

Jim Balent's femmes fatales have starred in such comics as DC's Catwoman *and his creator-owned* Tarot: Witch of the Black Rose *series.*

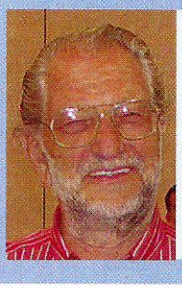


CHAPTER FOUR: CHARACTERS

- CREATING CHARACTERS
- BODY LANGUAGE
- ADVANCED BODY LANGUAGE
- MOVEMENT & MOTION
- MAKING CHARACTERS MOVE
- DYNAMIC FORESHORTENING
- ACTION SCENES
- FLIGHT
- ENERGY EFFECTS
- COSTUMES
- DESIGNING COSTUMES

CREATING CHARACTERS

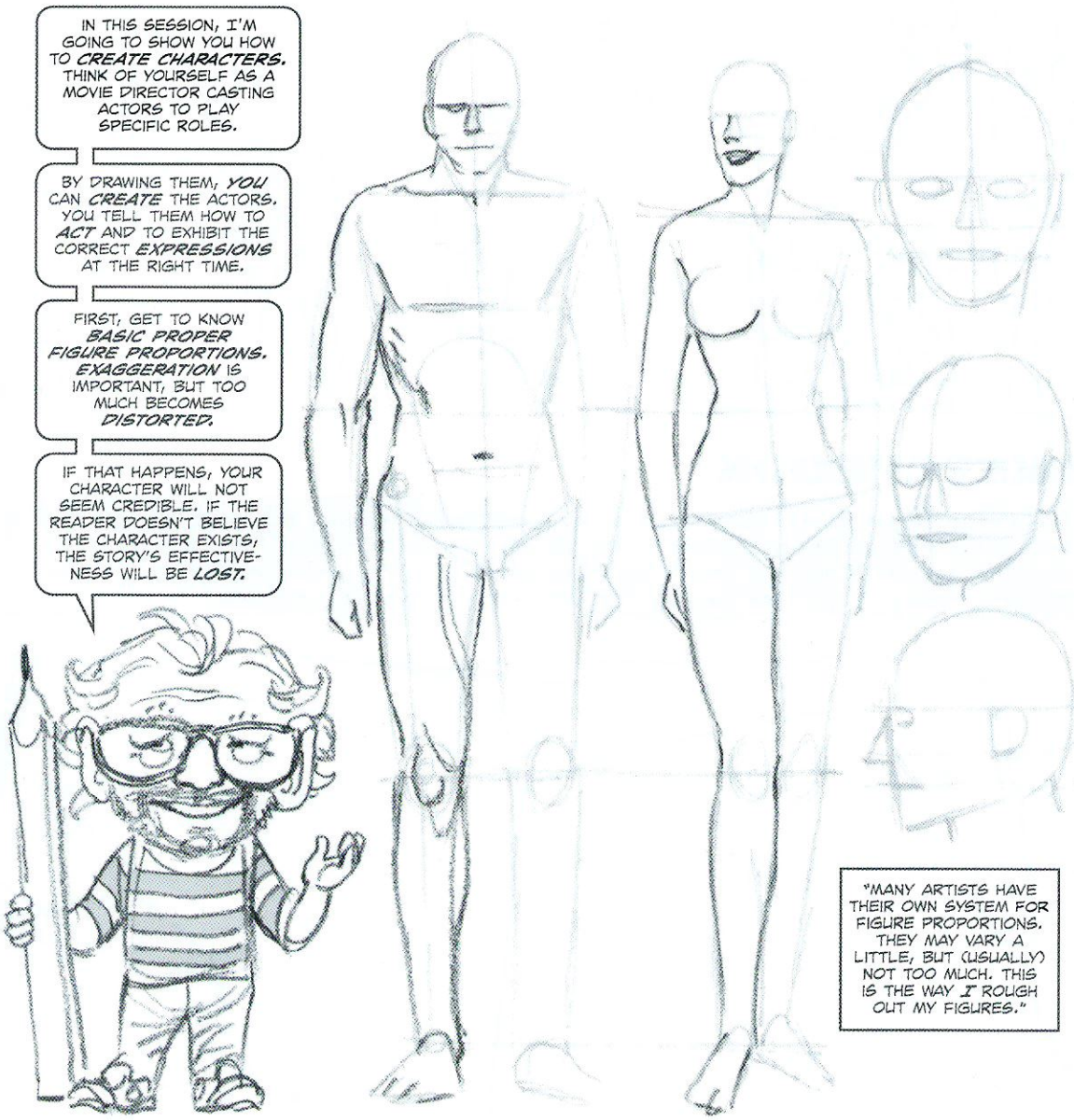
BY JOE KUBERT



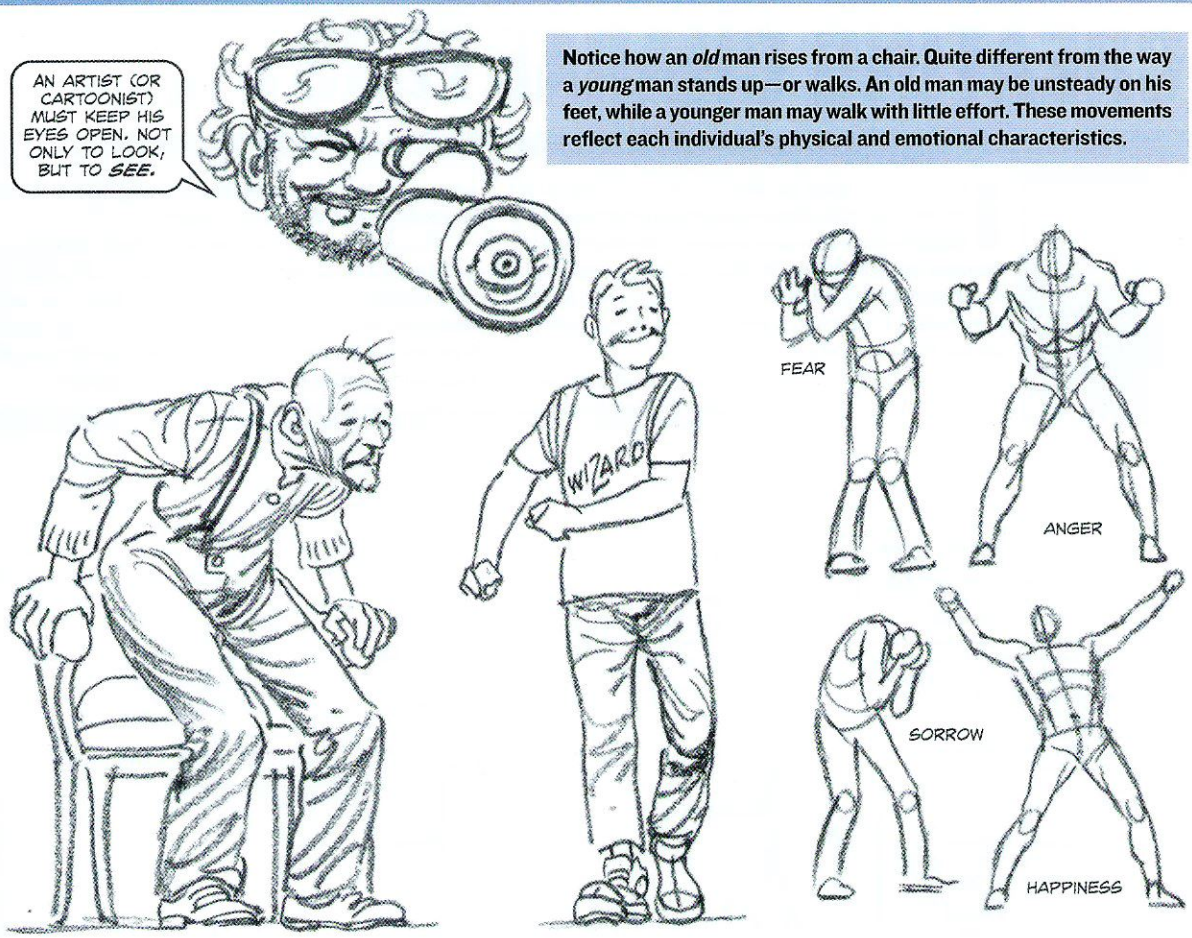
I hope you've been practicing a lot recently. Don't forget—your rate of improvement is in direct ratio to the amount of time you spend drawing. The more you draw, the more you will improve. It's like physical exercise. If you do a little every day the effectiveness is much more positive than if you do it only one day every two weeks. And after two weeks, it's like starting all over again.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Making mistakes, recognizing those mistakes and correcting them is the *best* way to learn and improve your drawing.

The suggestions that I make in these articles are based on the artwork of thousands of aspiring cartoonists that I've critiqued. Many have gone on to become successful professional cartoonists, graduates from the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art, Inc. and my series of correspondence courses.



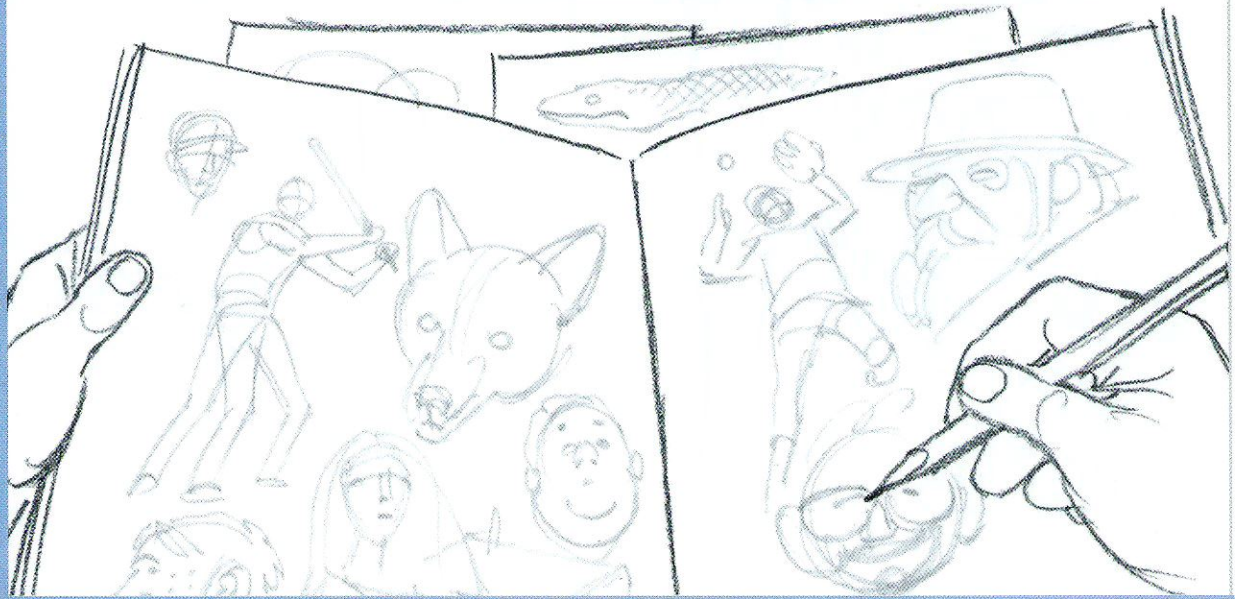
KUBERT PHOTO: PAUL SCHIRALDI



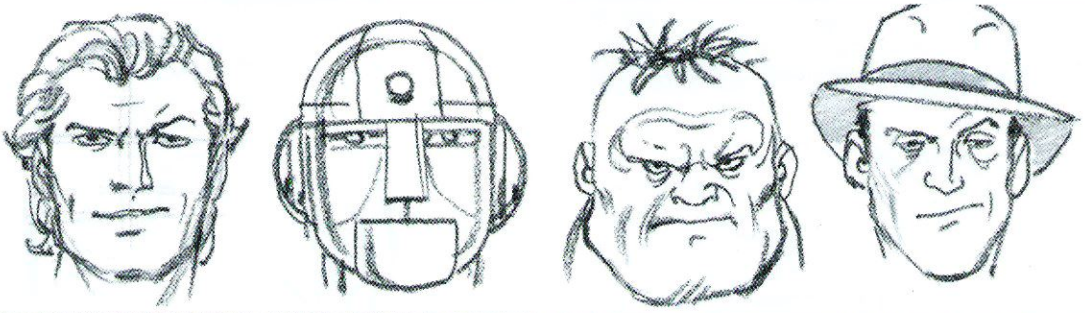
Notice how an *old* man rises from a chair. Quite different from the way a *young* man stands up—or walks. An old man may be unsteady on his feet, while a younger man may walk with little effort. These movements reflect each individual's physical and emotional characteristics.

SKETCHBOOK

Keep a sketchbook with you at all times. If you're in a park, make quick sketches of children at play. Watch the older kids playing ball. Analyze their movements. How do their actions differ from teenagers or adults? Make more sketches. They don't have to be complete. Just sketch a few lines to show the flow of action and balance. Their body movements will tell you a lot about them, and you can incorporate your sketches into the characters that you create.



The character you design should *physically* reflect the *characteristics* with which you have endowed him. The character's *attitude* should also be clearly delineated. Ask yourself: what do I know about this character? How should he look? Analyze your character. Give him a history—a life. Your drawing should be a graphic description containing as much information as a written biography.

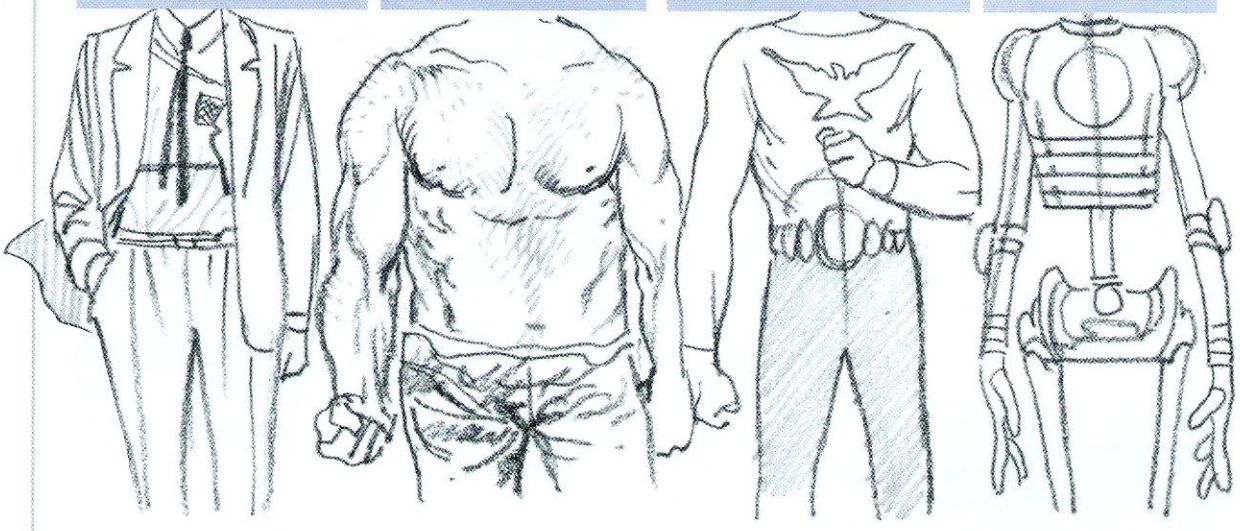


1. The *hero* is clean cut, clear-eyed and square-jawed, with a thick head of hair.

2. The *robotic* hero is essentially expressionless.

3. The oversized *bruiser* hero has a thick neck, heavily furrowed brow and unkempt hair.

4. The *detective* may look a bit dissipated due to his profession.

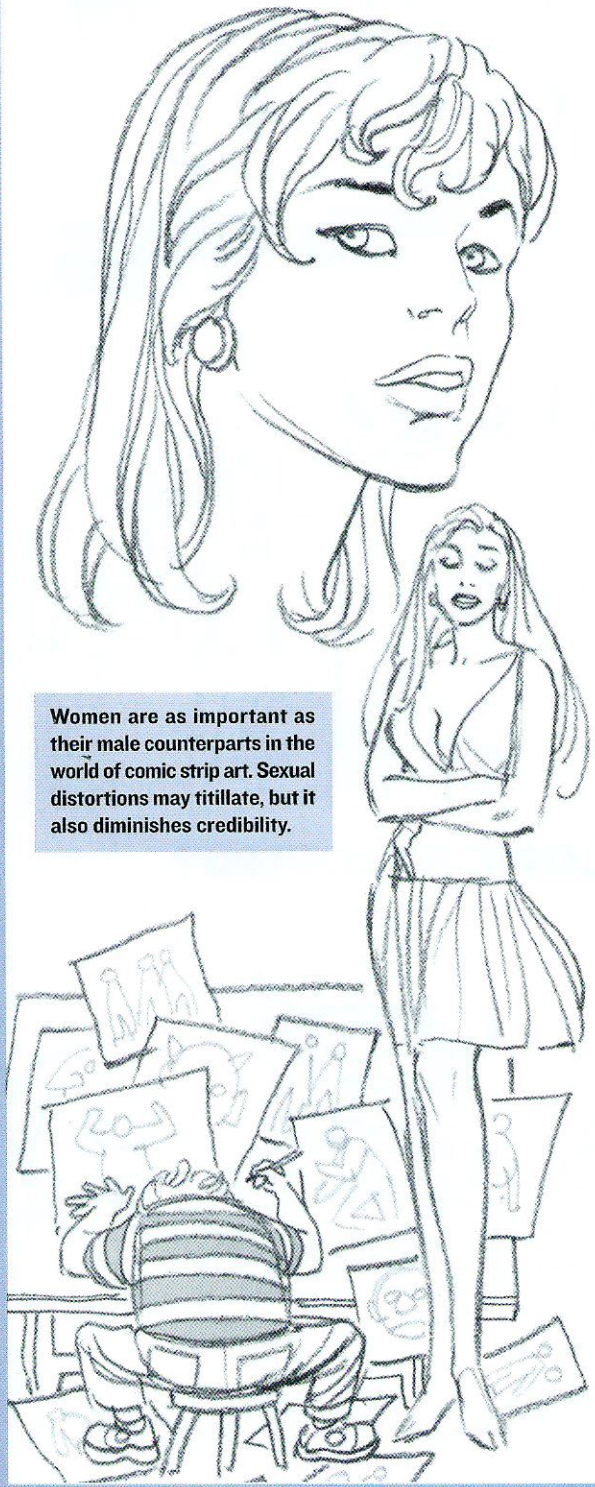


WHOSEBODYBELONGSTOWHO?



WOMEN

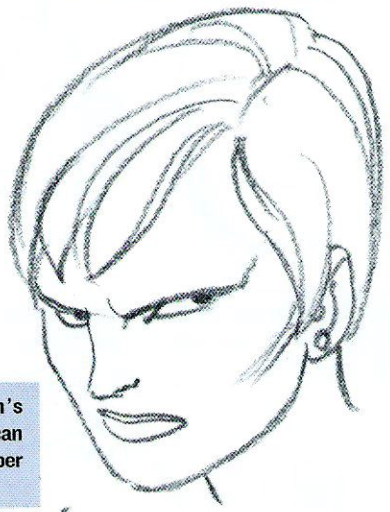
Many male students have told me that they find it more difficult to draw women. Conversely, female students generally find it more difficult to draw men. The reason is obvious. Women tend to draw women and men tend to draw men. This, however, does not lessen the need for the cartoonist to be able to draw *anything* and *everything*.



Women are as important as their male counterparts in the world of comic strip art. Sexual distortions may titillate, but it also diminishes credibility.

VILLAINS

A female may play the role of villain as effectively as a male. She may be as powerful physically, but she should still maintain a high degree of femininity.



A villain's anatomy can reflect super powers...



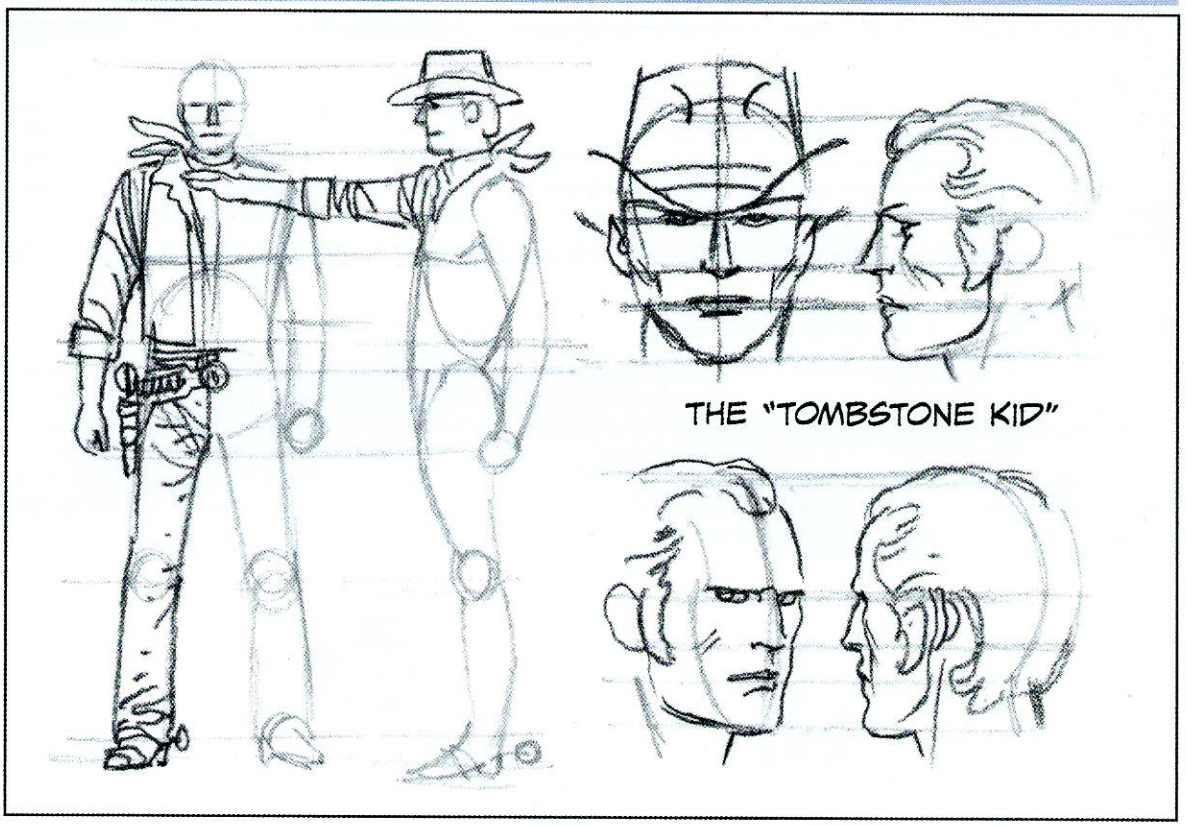
...but if overly exaggerated, he can look silly.

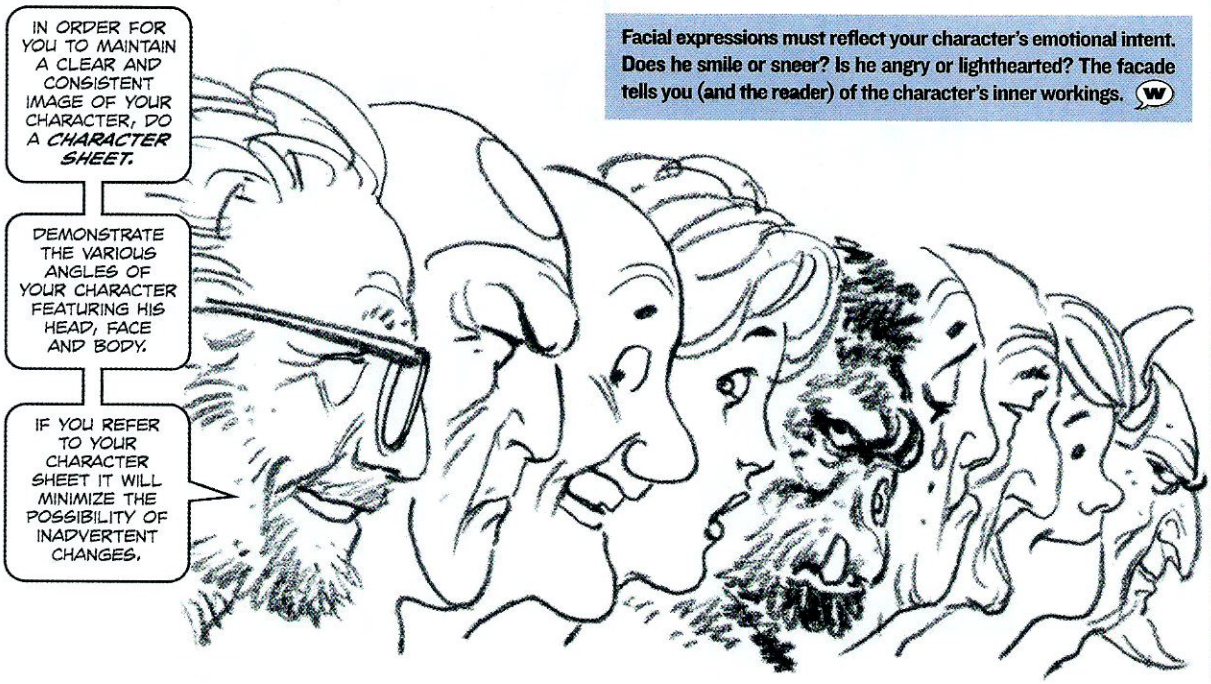


A villain may be handsome—with a dangerous look.



No matter how well you think you know your character, there is always a tendency to add or subtract or change little nuances. A nose; a bit too long or too short. Eyes; too large or too small. A mouth; too wide or too narrow. A figure; too short or too tall, too thin or too fat.

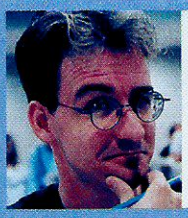




Facial expressions must reflect your character's emotional intent. Does he smile or sneer? Is he angry or lighthearted? The facade tells you (and the reader) of the character's inner workings.

Comics legend Joe Kubert is the founder of the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art. For more information, head over to www.kubertsworld.com. Also, check out his graphic novel Sgt. Rock: Between Hell and a Hard Place *from DC.*

BODY LANGUAGE BY MATT HALEY



Body language is one of the most misunderstood parts of the drawing process. I know some of you out there are thinking, "Just draw a guy punching another guy, and you're done!" But it's not that simple. The term "body language" refers to the pose one's body adopts to convey a particular attitude or emotion. It's something we all do every day, consciously or not.

In the following pages, I'm going to show you just how to "pose" your characters so they seem a little more believable. Ideally, you want the reader to understand what's happening without reading the word balloons, and an evocative pose can really pull the reader in! Now, let's get into trouble, baby...

PERFECTPOSTURE

A good, believable pose should tell the audience just what mood your character's in and what he intends to do. A bad pose, on the other hand, can make your character look ridiculous! Take poor Hawkeye here (**Figure A**). He needs a chiropractor! He doesn't look heroic, he looks uncomfortable. Look at how his back is arched and how stiffly his arms are held. It's hard to take him seriously.

On the other hand, Captain America looks confident, heroic and believable (**Figure B**). Even though he's standing still, he looks as if he might spring into action at any moment. Notice how it's not just the calm, self-assured look on his face, but his overall pose that tells us who he is. His arms are away from his body slightly (telling us he's ready for anything), his fists are clenched (but relaxed) and he's moving forward (to face whatever evils the writer throws at him), ready to kick Nazi butt!



FIGURE A

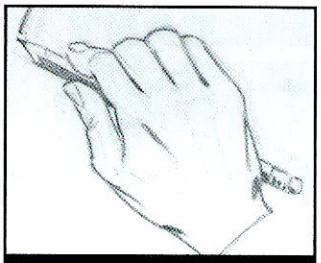


FIGURE B

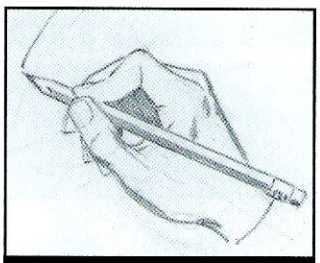
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GETAGRIP

One of the most important things I learned about drawing good body language was how to hold the pencil! For years, I'd been trying to sketch my basic drawings with a firm grip meant for rendering, resulting in stiff, unnatural-looking poses. Once I was shown how to use a light, "sketching" grip when breaking down a figure, my drawings suddenly became lifelike and natural! This sketching grip allows you to use the whole arm to create broad, sweeping lines. Try it.



LIGHT SKETCH GRIP



FIRM RENDERING GRIP

FIGURE C

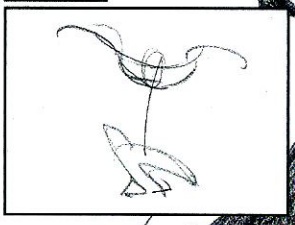


FIGURE D



STRIKEAPOSE

No matter what emotion you're trying to convey, you should always break down your figure. Here's how I ensure the most lifelike pose. First, I choose the attitude I want the character to convey. Let's say I want to draw a menacing-looking Moon Knight. "Menacing" brings to mind an image of Dracula, especially when applying it to a night-time character like Moon Knight, but since he's a superhero, Moon Knight also needs to be dynamic.

In the first sketch (**Figure C**), I draw the basic line for his spine, head, arms and legs. But I realize his left leg needs a more dynamic angle, so I change it and add the cape (**Figure D**), which helps add motion to the figure. Now here's the key: I sketch the pose as fast as I can, drawing only the lines needed to "read" the pose. Once I'm satisfied that the pose conveys the attitude I want, I start drawing Moon Knight's body over my initial sketch, still using the "sketching" grip. I try not to use the "rendering" grip until I start to draw details like his hands and face. That way, the figure will retain the menacing attitude I want without stiffening up.

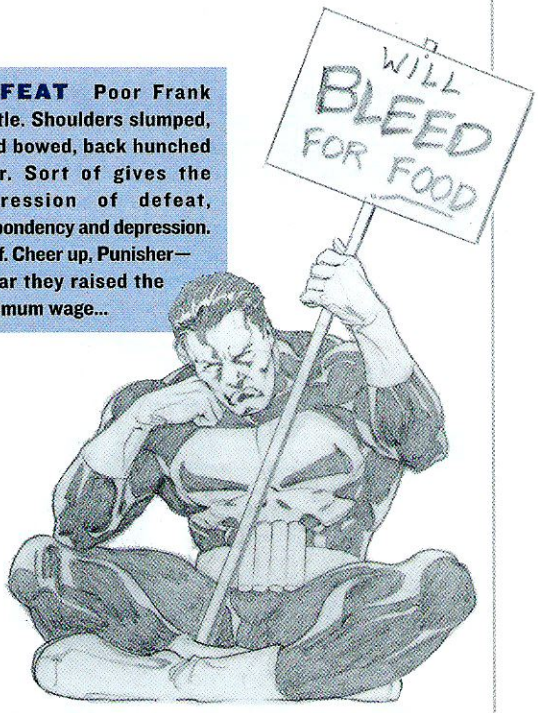
SOEMOTIONALBABY

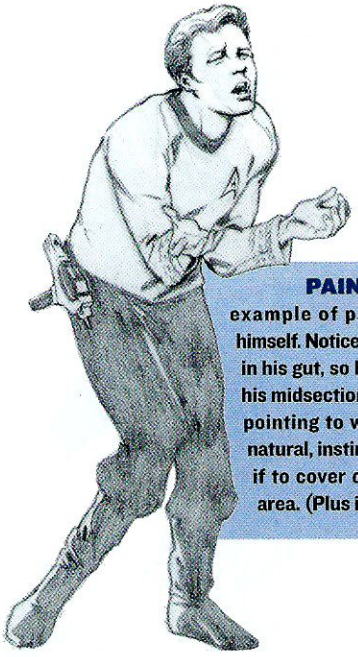
Body language can convey a number of different emotions. Everything from love to shock to pain can be expressed through your movements. Here are a few examples to get you thinking about just what your body's trying to say.



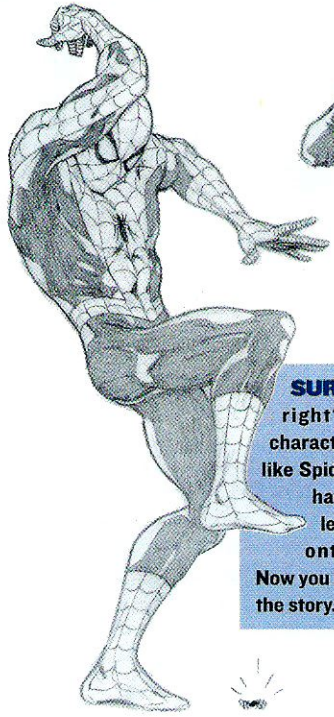
LOVE The pose Black Cat's striking here is the typical pose for a girl in love. Her hands clasped over one shoulder, head tilted towards the object of her affection, and one foot swept back, all seem to say, "I'm in love!"

DEFEAT Poor Frank Castle. Shoulders slumped, head bowed, back hunched over. Sort of gives the impression of defeat, despondency and depression. Sniff. Cheer up, Punisher—I hear they raised the minimum wage...

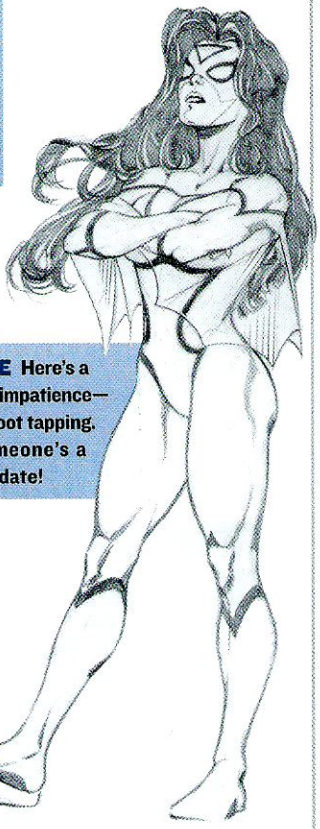




PAIN I can't think of a better example of pain than Captain Kirk himself. Notice that the pain seems to be in his gut, so his body is folded around his midsection, with his elbows almost pointing to where it hurts. This is a natural, instinctive reaction to pain, as if to cover or protect the offending area. (Plus it looks great on camera!)



SURPRISE Surprise? That's simple, right? Not so fast! What if your character is wearing a full-face mask, like Spidey? Sure, you could cheat and have his eyeholes open wide, but let's say they're actually stitched onto his mask and can't move. Now you have to use body language to tell the story.



IMPATIENCE Here's a typical pose for impatience—arms crossed, foot tapping. Looks like someone's a little late for a date!

WHERETHEGIRLSARE

All right, listen up, 'cause I'm only going to say this once! (Ahem) *Women have spines.* Yep, just like real people! They hardly ever stand (well, float) like Mary Jane Watson here (**Figure E**). Man, that looks painful...and what the heck is she standing on? I know you want your female characters to be appealing, guys, but just because your favorite artist draws his female character in the same "sexy-swimsuit pose" whether she's fighting demons or burning toast doesn't mean you have to!

With a character like She-Hulk (**Figure F**), for example, you have to depict her as strong, courageous, able and, of course, beautiful. The way she's standing—balanced, poised, with a slight tilt to the head as she looks at us over her shoulder—tells us a lot more about her than a ripped T-shirt ever could. (And hey, this example also shows how to make a woman look appealing without having to show her chest!) Just remember to treat your female characters like real people instead of swimsuit images, and they'll be a lot more memorable!



FIGURE E

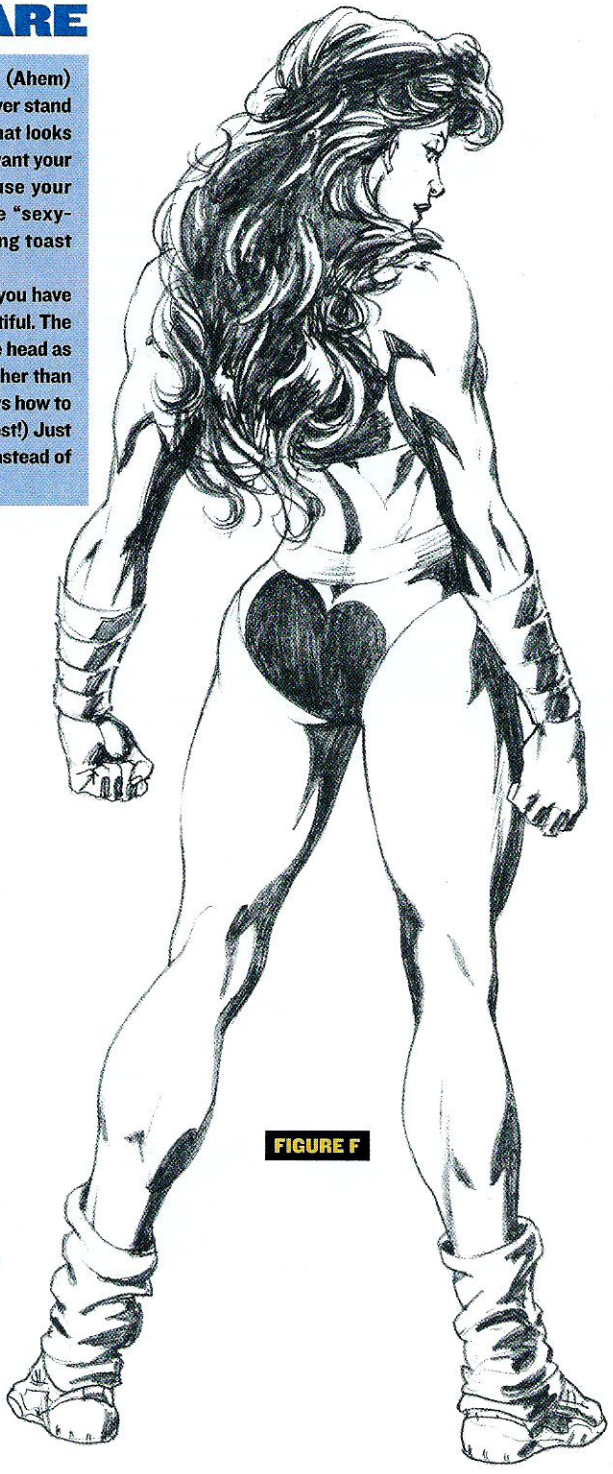


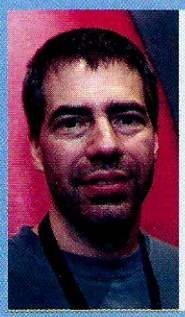
FIGURE F

I COULD GO ON FOR PAGES about the many different emotions that body language displays, but unfortunately I just don't have the room. So don't forget that ultimately, the best poses come from life—watch other people and sketch them! For a perspective on the use of body language from a master, track down Will Eisner's *Comics and Sequential Art* or any work by Alex Toth and Jack Kirby (Toth being subtle and Kirby being ultra-dynamic). Whether you draw for a living or just as a hobby, giving your characters convincing body language will make the difference between an ordinary picture and an unforgettable work of art!

Matt Haley speaks to the fans with body language in DC's Birds of Prey *and the Superman found in Jerry Seinfeld's American Express ads.*

ADVANCED BODY LANGUAGE

BY JIM CALAFIORE



Despite being a static medium, comics is not an inactive one. Even in the still image of a panel, characters are—and must be—conveying their thoughts through dialogue of the voice and/or dialogue of the body. If, in moments where a character is speaking, the body language doesn't match the voiced language (narration or spoken), there's a "disconnect" that hinders the reader's belief in the world we're trying so hard to create. And, of course, if there's no dialogue or narration at all, the language of the body is all that's left.

Usually in my advice to aspiring artists, I recommend researching real life. For studying body language, I say don't. Study film. Actors perform with their whole bodies, not just their voices. They're trained to convey meaning with their body, and the better the actor, the more you'll see.

So I'm recommending that you spend countless hours on the couch with a drink and munchies and watch movie after movie after movie. Tell your parents I said it's okay.

But there's a lesson waiting....

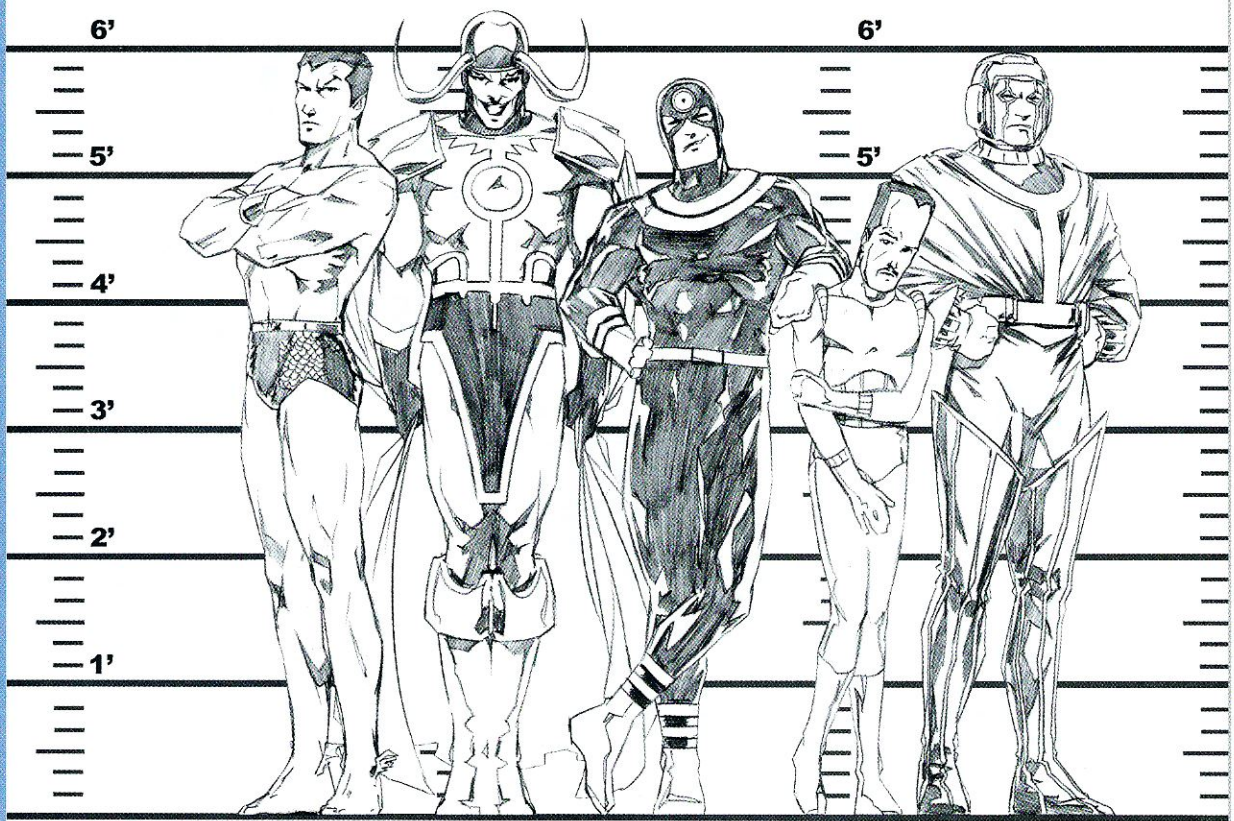
WHODUNNIT?

This first example is just a quick exercise. Something big has gone down, and the heroes have been forced to round up the usual suspects. Who's the guilty party?

The Leader (second from right) is the obvious choice; the little runt sure looks guilty, not happy about the lineup at all. But, let's not be hasty. Consider the body language with the other characters. Namor (far left), arrogant as ever, is daring us to discover it's him. Bullseye (middle), while confident, is also the epitome of cavalier; he could care less if we figured out it was him. And Kang (far right), as always, is overconfident; he's sure we'll never guess it was him.

When posing figures, you have to take in to account who the character is. There are some postures a character will never assume. (Like the Leader, who would never stand like that, but I needed somebody to look really guilty.)

Oh, and Loki? He's just a sadistic nut-job; don't bother trying to read him.

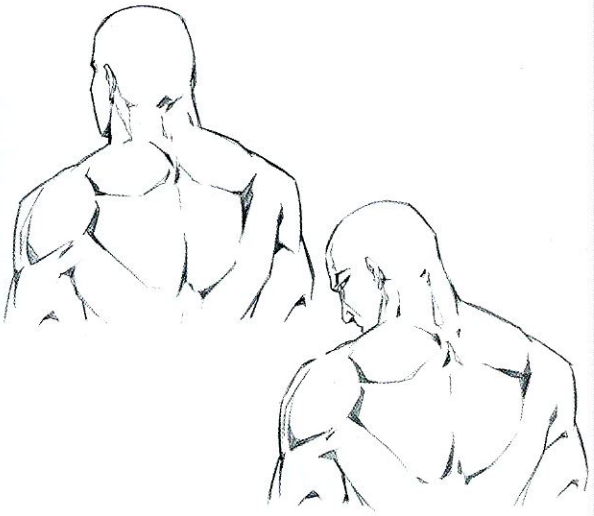


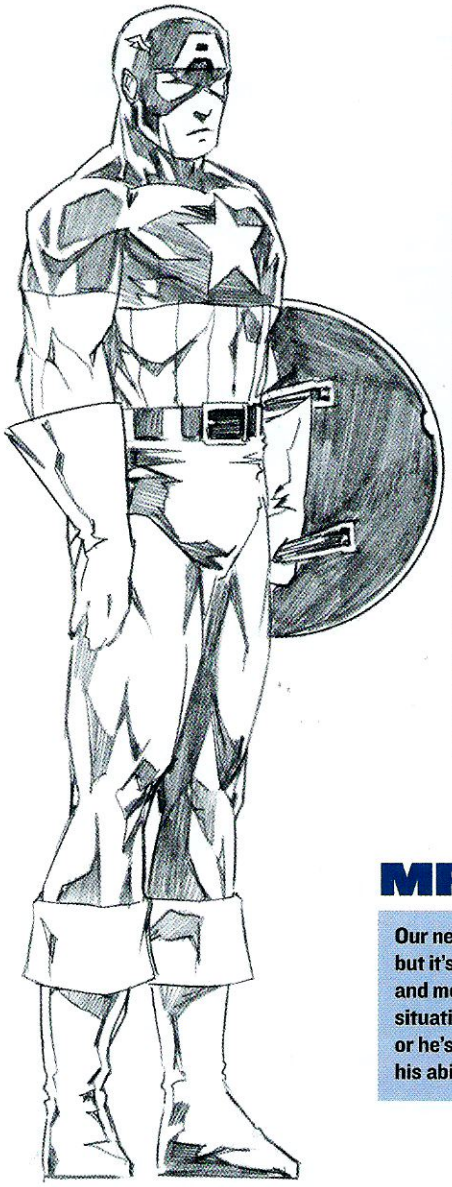
ALL CHARACTERS ™ & © THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS. PHOTO: STEVE PRUE.

BACKTALK

For this lesson, I'm not going over the extreme body positions and posing. Obvious physical expressions (extreme anguish, pain, etc.) are the easy stuff, and you should be able to recognize them right off. I'm concentrating here on the subtler body language. For most of the time in a comic, your characters are going to be at rest, not in action.

For example, take the nondescript figure at right. When one character speaks with his back to another, that's a posture of avoidance, hiding anything from the inconsequential to the malevolent. In the first pose, the figure is simply standing there, presenting his back. There's little intent to his posture. His rigid body could be a further effort to disguise his intentions, but we really don't know. But by turning the head down and to the left (and having his eye turned back towards us), the body language is now sneaky, if not downright sinister. A subtle change has given us a mountain of information.

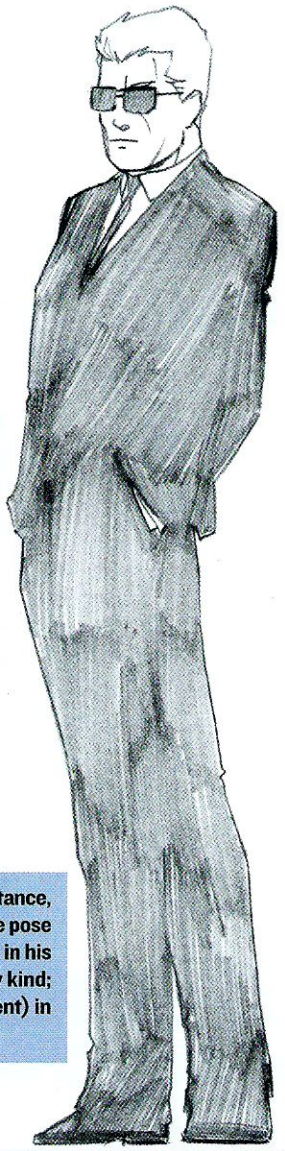




ROLLCALL

We'll start with some standing body language. When drawing a 22-page monthly book, you'd be surprised how much standing around the characters can do. Having them stand stiffly is boring, like filling a room with mannequins. (Unless you're into that sort of thing. We won't judge...) If you've ever seen an amateur theater production, you can always pick out the inexperienced actors, because they don't know what to do with their bodies when they're not speaking.

Of course, some characters can be stiff by their nature. Captain "Pole-Up-His-Butt" America is very comfortable standing like this, at almost military attention. Balanced poses, weight equally distributed on both feet, are a way of having a character display that he's ever-vigilant, ready for action even when at rest.



MR.CONFIDENCE

Our next character to the right also has a "balanced" stance, but it's more relaxed. The character is sagging in to the pose and more rooted to the ground. He's very comfortable in his situation, feeling no need for defense or action of any kind; or he's supremely confident (maybe even overconfident) in his ability to jump in to action if need be.

WHO, ME?

FIGURE A

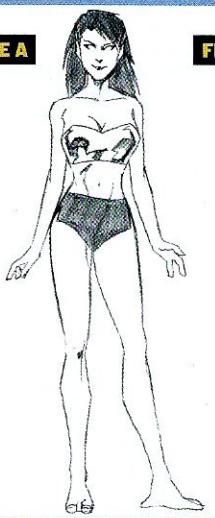


FIGURE B



Figure A is an inherently relaxed pose. With all the body weight on one foot, the hip on that side is forced higher and out of position. Whether sexy or arrogant or even impatient, it's not a "ready" pose. Springing into action, offensive or defensive, isn't as easy from here, and it's not what the character is worried about.

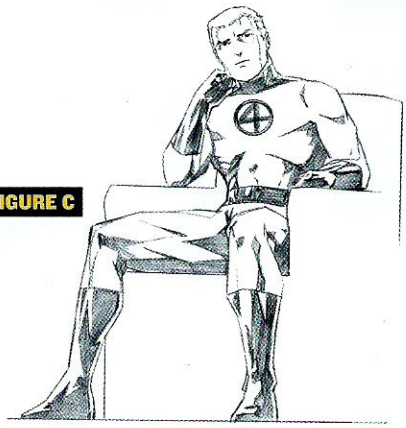
Standing with feet together (**Figure B**) can be a very innocent pose, but can also be a deceptive stance. "Who, me?" Do we really believe she's an innocent little girl?

REST YOUR CASE

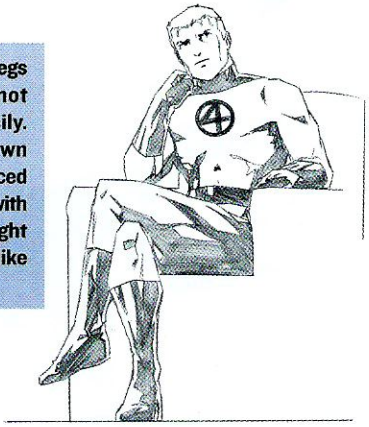
Characters in comics sit as much as they stand, but that won't keep you from conveying information. Often where they're sitting will dictate some of the posture. Are they on a throne or on "the throne"? Are they on a comfy sofa or a Judas Cradle? (Google it; not pleasant.) But for now, let's just consider the figure on a generic seat.

In **Figure C**, Reed Richards is looking pretty comfortable and relaxed. His upper body has sagged off-center, and he's resting his head on his fist. His legs are parted and even, feet planted firmly; like the previous Captain America pose, it's balanced from the waist down and ready for abrupt motion if necessary. He's relaxed, but not immobile.

FIGURE C



To the right, not so much. The legs are crossed. This figure is not springing from the chair easily. When a figure restricts its own movements in a natural, unforced way, it conveys complete ease with the situation (even if that might be evil, megalomaniacal ease, like Dr. Doom might display).





With this figure, by simply rotating the arm down and dropping the head, I've changed the whole mood of the character (compare this to **Figure C**). Not only is his attention wholly internal, the droop of the head and the limp, almost useless attitude of the arm infer some despair; a slight amount of despondency.



In this final illustration, I've gotten the legs and feet involved to push that mood, bending them awkwardly. The figure feels more vulnerable now, open in a bad way. Reed's given in to the hopelessness of the situation. Awkward body positions in "at rest" moments can have the same effect as revealing personal dialogue; it's a dropping of the character's guard and defenses.

ARMEDAND DANGEROUS

Arms are the spice of body language. They can take a comfortable pose and make it pensive; take a secure moment and make it apprehensive. You will get the most mileage out of arm positions.

Figure D shows a fairly common arms-crossed posture, and while still a "closed" body language, it's a pretty confident stance, more challenging than defensive. However, in **Figure E** by dropping the head again, the physical expression is now introspective and thoughtful.

Now let's get the arms involved. During insecure moments, having the arms crossed is a definitely defensive posture, closing off physically. Stacking the arms as in **Figure F** intensifies that, covering one arm with the other completely, protectively, closing the figure off visually as much as the arms can. **Figure G** ratchets up the emotion. Whatever has her feeling anxious chills her insides unnaturally.

If the character has no arms, as in **Figure H**, they're not going to say much. But they are up for the lead in the Venus de Milo biopic.

FIGURE D



FIGURE E



FIGURE F



FIGURE G



FIGURE H



FACE VS. ARMS

Okay, some of you at this point might be saying, "Yeah, but in all the examples, the facial expressions really make the emotion." Fair point. So let's try an experiment. Take General Thunderbolt Ross (below) and fix his facial expression (and if there's a character with limited emotional range, boy, is he one) and see what we can do.

In **Figure I**, he's a roadblock, confronting us—or teenage Betty has apparently gotten home at 3 in the morning. In **Figure J**, he's accusing us or making a point. Either way, it's less threatening than the previous. **Figure K** is his best Cowardly Lion impersonation: "Put 'em up, put 'em up!" **Figure L** is more agitated, arms away from the body, making a heated or emphatic point during a discussion.

We were limited here by the facial expression to a certain extent, but we managed to have all four figures display different emotional levels.

FIGURE I



FIGURE J



FIGURE K

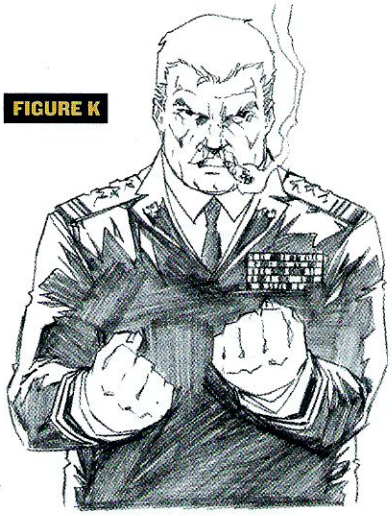
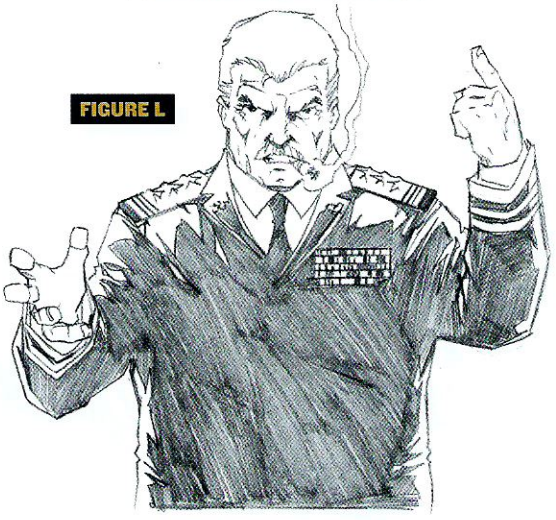


FIGURE L

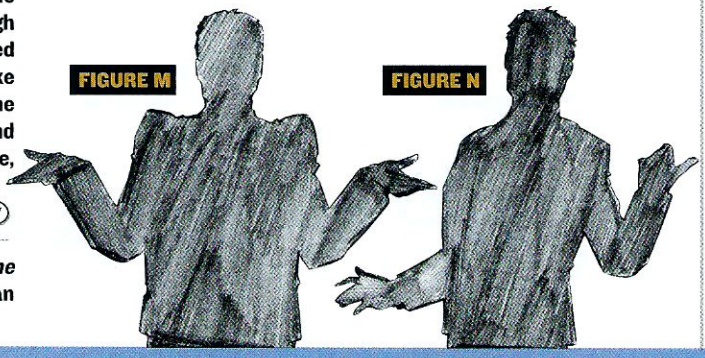


EVEN SILHOUETTES can be recognizable if the body language is very "readable." You can't look through a comic without finding at least one or two silhouetted figures. (And it's not just a way for the artist to make his deadline... It's not... No, really...) **Figure M** is one position I use frequently in my daily real-world life, and find very useful: "Beats me." And **Figure N** is, of course, the universal symbol for "Let's get outta here."

So let's. Bye.

FIGURE M

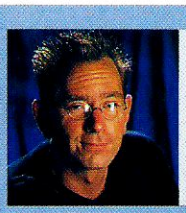
FIGURE N



Jim Calafiore's fine craftsmanship has improved the pages of many comic books, including DC's Aquaman *and Marvel's* Exiles.

MOVEMENT & MOTION

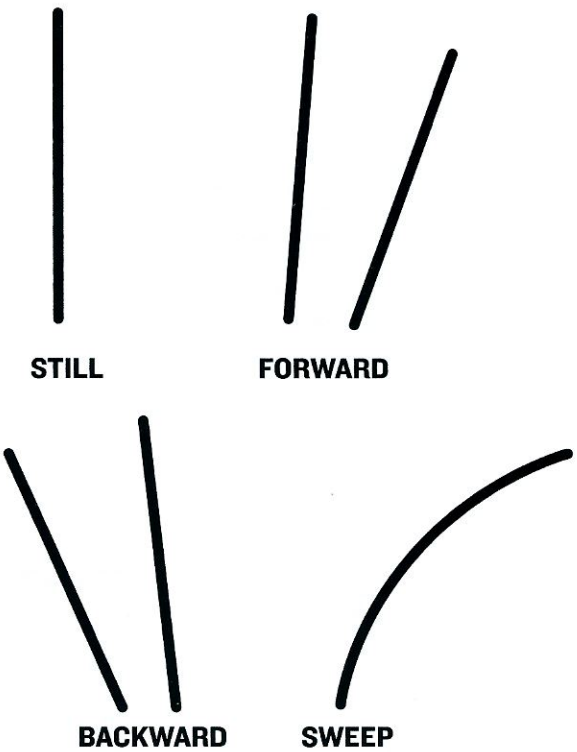
BY BART SEARS



Hello there! We're going to talk about how to create the feeling of life in your drawings by the use of movement and motion. You must remember that even when someone or something is at rest (standing still), it is moving and alive. You have to breathe this life into the things that you draw, and not just with speed lines and effects, but with actual motion drawn into the people (or whatever) you illustrate. So bear with me. There are some relatively simple rules and guidelines to follow that can help you learn how to capture movement in immobile, two-dimensional drawings. Let's get on with it!

LINEUP!

The simplest way to start to create motion in figures, or whatever's moving, is with the center line. The center line is the line drawn through the center of a figure, following the line of the backbone, which describes the general action of that figure. Take a look at the center lines, which can, from this point onward, also be referred to as action lines, which I have drawn to the right. Notice that a line drawn parallel to a border, or to the side or bottom of the page, creates a feeling of stillness or no motion. Note that if you tip this line forward or backward, even very slightly, you start to create movement. Now look at the last action line drawn below...the one labeled SWEEP. This type of center line, alone and in conjunction with its relations, is responsible for most, if not all, of those pulse-pounding fight scenes that everyone really loves in their favorite comics. Sweeping action lines are the most noticeable, and the easiest to execute, because the actions they generally describe are of a grossly exaggerated kind. As in acting (I believe, anyway), it is always easier to draw (or play) characters acting larger than life than it is to draw (or play) the characters whose movements and mannerisms are of a subtler nature. Therefore, we will start with the big, sweeping action lines.





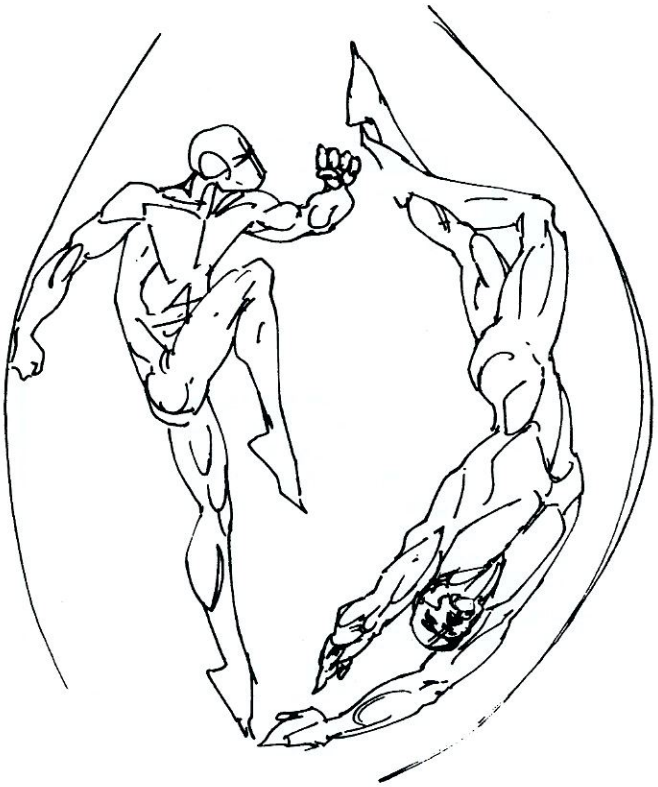
In the illustration to the left, notice how the center line, which is tilted slightly backwards, creates a feeling of the character snatching her head back, away from something or in reaction to something. Center lines are the basics of action.

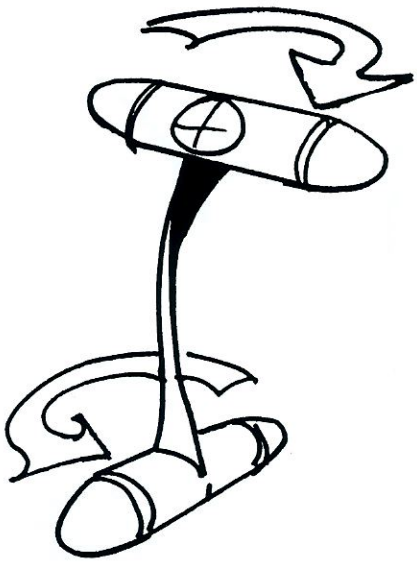
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ACTIONFIGURES

Now that we've taken a look at center lines, let's see how they translate into figures. Here are a couple of simple sweeping action lines, and next to them are a couple of figures drawn using these action lines as center lines (those two words are virtually interchangeable). Take a good look at the figures. Obviously, there is more going on with them than a simple center line, which we'll get into shortly, but notice how the flow of the figures matches the flow of the corresponding action line. Like everything else in drawing powerful comics, motion and movement are built in stages, and each stage has to be done correctly before going onto the next one or your finished work will have problems, starting from the first rushed mistake and continuing on through each successive stage. Approach your work intelligently, think things through and try not to rush through it while you're learning. Spend the time now, and down the road things will come together easier, and your work will be better and more successful because of it.

When drawing over a center line, construct your figure strongly, remembering to use the action line as the basis for the spine, and build off of that. For simple, straightforward actions, keep the flow of the arms, legs and head within the same basic sweep of the action line.



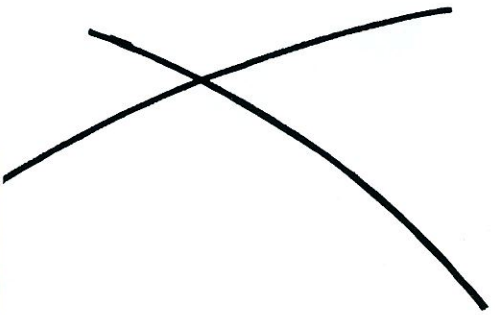


TWISTED

To create even more motion within a figure, try twisting the torso. What that means is turning the shoulder line to an angle with the hip line, as better explained in the drawing to the left. The shoulder can dip towards the hip, but not too much. Remember, don't twist the shoulders to an angle of more than 45 degrees to the hips in any direction! By twisting the hips and shoulders, you create tension within a figure, which creates motion.

OPPOSINGLINES

If it's true that parallel lines suggest no motion (and I believe it is), then opposing lines create motion. Look at the two action lines drawn to the right. Two simple opposing action lines, by their very nature, create force and tension (they don't even have to cross). Imagine a hero and villain locked in a titanic struggle far above the Earth—energy glittering wildly about them, the fate of world in the balance, their muscles rippling and surging with power, etc. Now, using these action lines, you can draw it!



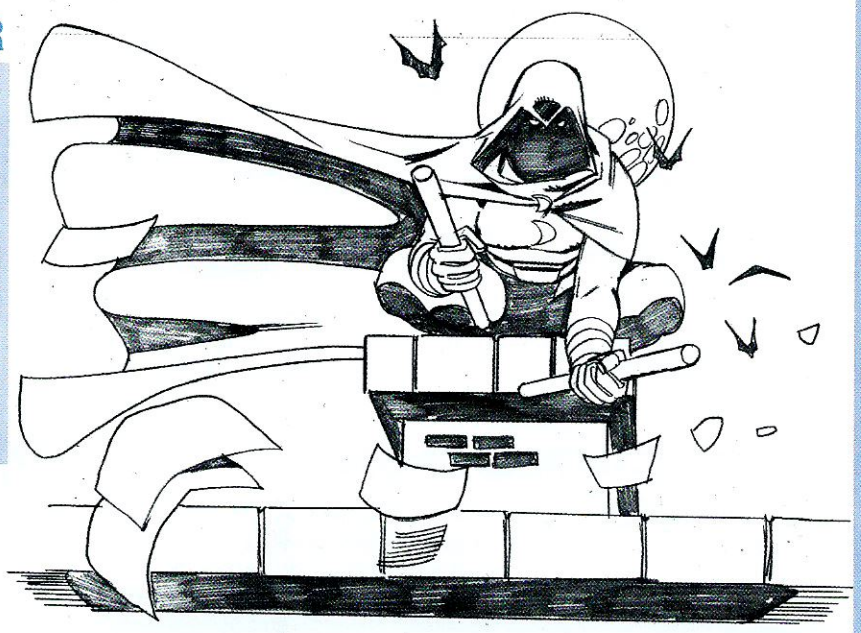
A LITTLE DOES MORE & MORE

Now we have to talk a little about the difficult part of movement and motion, the subtleties. Anyone sitting, laying, standing, hanging around, talking, watching TV, etc., is moving and has life and motion, even if it's only breathing. Even comic book characters have to appear to breathe. People aren't wooden statues. They slouch and shift and fidget all of the time, and so should your characters. You can make your characters real and alive by giving them motion, especially subtle motion. Creating subtle motion is just like creating those bold actions, but just tone it down. Instead of broad, sweeping, aggravated, opposing



AIRWALKER

You can use air, or more specifically wind, to create some really cool, lively effects. Capes are great for this type of thing! You can liven up even the most static of scenes with capes and wind—like this Moon Knight I drew! He's tensed up, stalking, ready to strike...but he's not doin' a lotta moving. So how do you add some motion? Simple. Make his cape billow ominously in the night air. Toss in some blowin' papers and some cool bats, and you've got one awesome scene!





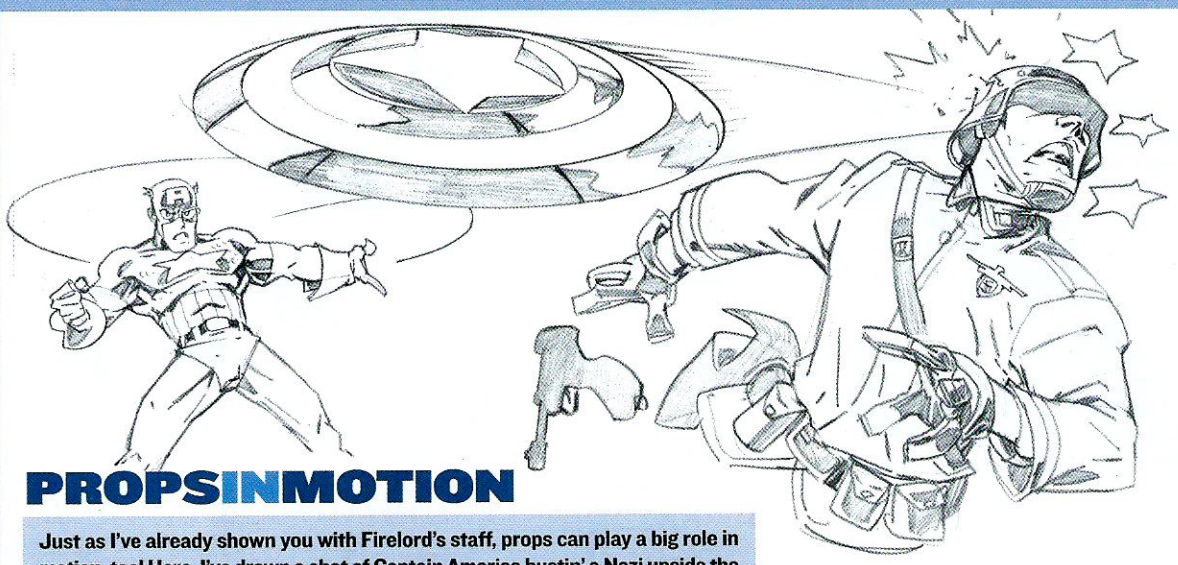
FIRESTORM

Firelord's whippin' that blazing staff of his around, leaving a funky trail of fire that you can follow, and giving it that cool sense of motion! Notice how the different thicknesses of the fire help convey motion. As with speed lines, the fire trail gets smaller as the motion has passed. You can do the same thing with the Human Torch and his fire trail when he's flying!

PRO TIPS

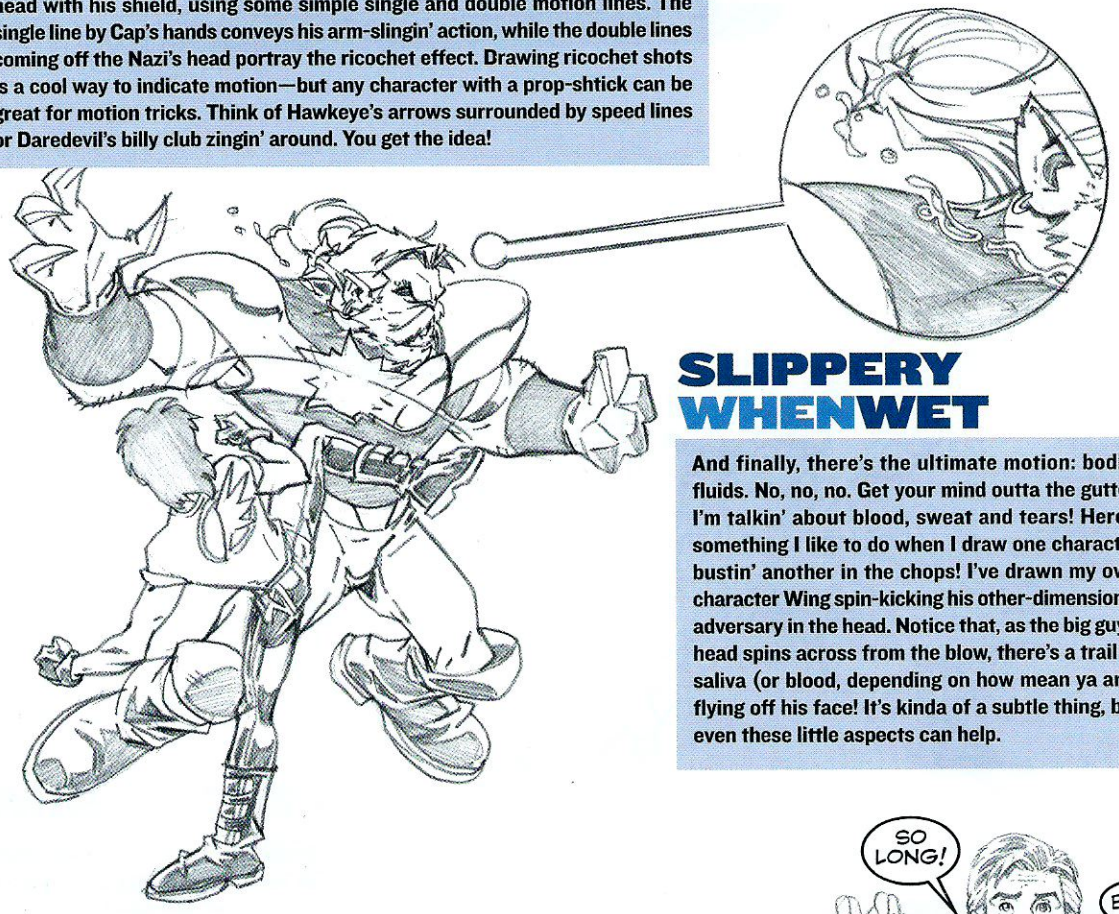
SLOW AND STEADY

"I used to just take too long and I always wished I could have drawn things faster. There were a lot of stories I wanted to do that I never got a chance to because I was slow. But on the other hand, the fact that I was careful and very story-conscious and conscientious about making it as good as I possibly could had people remembering my stuff." —John Romita Sr., *Amazing Spider-Man*



PROPSINMOTION

Just as I've already shown you with Firelord's staff, props can play a big role in motion, too! Here, I've drawn a shot of Captain America bustin' a Nazi upside the head with his shield, using some simple single and double motion lines. The single line by Cap's hands conveys his arm-slingin' action, while the double lines coming off the Nazi's head portray the ricochet effect. Drawing ricochet shots is a cool way to indicate motion—but any character with a prop-shtick can be great for motion tricks. Think of Hawkeye's arrows surrounded by speed lines or Daredevil's billy club zingin' around. You get the idea!



SLIPPERY WHENWET

And finally, there's the ultimate motion: bodily fluids. No, no, no. Get your mind outta the gutter. I'm talkin' about blood, sweat and tears! Here's something I like to do when I draw one character bustin' another in the chops! I've drawn my own character Wing spin-kicking his other-dimensional adversary in the head. Notice that, as the big guy's head spins across from the blow, there's a trail of saliva (or blood, depending on how mean ya are) flying off his face! It's kinda of a subtle thing, but even these little aspects can help.



WELL FOLKS, it's been great sharing some of my "tricks" with you! Unfortunately, due to space constraints, I could only present a few examples. But remember, just think of your characters as always moving, always in motion...you're just freezing them at one specific point where as much stuff is happenin' as you've got the gumption (or time) to squeeze in!

Mike Wieringo's fluid pencils have graced the pages of Marvel's Fantastic Four, *DC's* Flash *and his creator-owned project,* Tellos.

DYNAMIC FORESHORTENING

BY MATT HALEY

That's right, I said dynamic foreshortening, because while making people and objects appear to shrink and grow in proper perspective is crucial for any kind of art, we're talking about applying this technique to making comics more exciting—and that's what it's all about, isn't it? Simply put, the term "foreshortening" means that an object appears to get shorter as it is tilted away from the viewer; foreshortening is an artist's main tool to make a 2-D object look 3-D on paper. Using it dynamically can transform a superhero's punch into a mighty wallop instead of a love tap. Let's break some lead...

FORESCORE

The first thing we should do is show the difference between foreshortening in real life (say, in a movie) and dynamic foreshortening on a comics page. In the real world, the fist at the end of an outstretched arm will not appear any larger than when it's held at one's side. In comics, however, the fist must look larger as it comes toward the viewer, in order to simulate action and increase tension. Notice how Spidey's "real life" punch (**Figure A**) looks pretty boring? There's nothing wrong with the pose itself; it's just not terribly involving. But the "comics" punch (**Figure B**) looks like it's gonna take your head off—which is what we want! This is because we've treated the arm as a pillar: It gradually gets wider as it gets nearer to us, and ends with a larger-than-normal fist (not too big, though!). The great thing about this effect is that you don't need to add any speed lines or sound effects to get your point across; the figure itself tells the story.

FIGURE A



FIGURE B



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YOUDUMMY

It's extremely important to get an artist's mannequin. It's an invaluable tool for wrapping your brain around foreshortening, since you can pose it pretty much any way you want. Some people use a computer program called "Poser," but sometimes there's no substitute for the real thing. Any art supply store sells mannequins, and they ain't expensive.

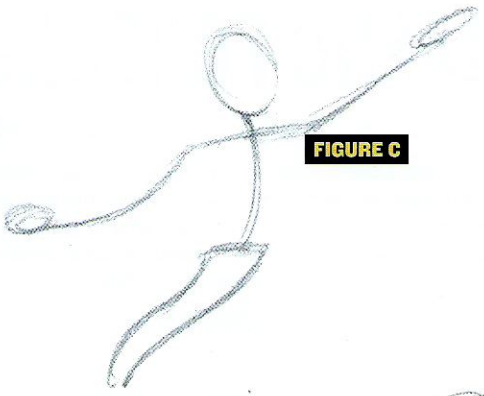


FIGURE C

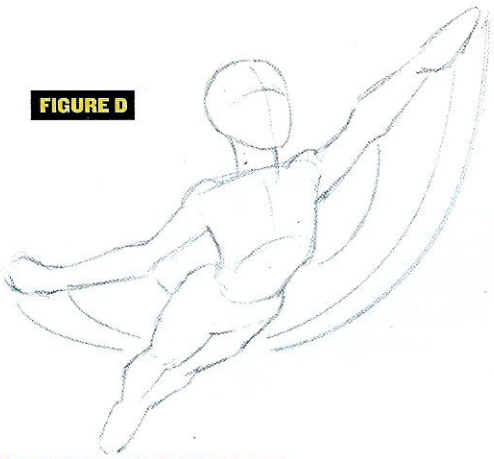


FIGURE D

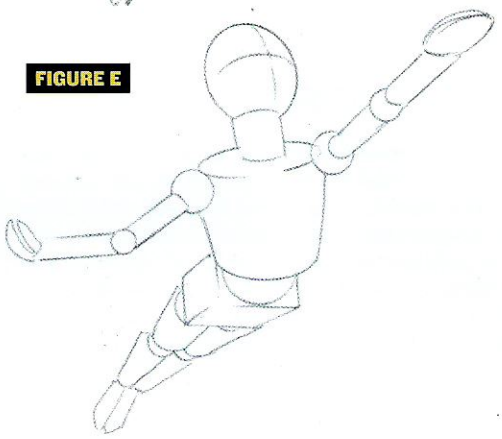


FIGURE E

TOTHEFORE

Okay, here's my personal, step-by-step method to plan out foreshortening. Let's say we want to do a dynamic shot of Rogue flying powerfully across the page. Well, first we have to decide on a pose (this is where the mannequin comes in handy) and sketch it out (**Figure C**). The next step is to get the proportions right (the mannequin can also help here, or you can even use an action figure!). Next, sketch the body part you want to foreshorten in its natural position (in this case, the arms parallel to the torso), and then plot the arc of movement each arm makes up to the position you want to place it in, again referring to the mannequin (**Figure D**). Pretty simple, eh?



PILLAROFSTRENGTH

Once the arms are proportioned correctly, it's time to "build mass," as Arnold would say. To do this, we fall back on the tried-and-true method of viewing the body parts as combinations of spheres, cylinders and cubes. Notice in **Figure E** how our sketch of Rogue is composed of just that—geometric solids. This is the "pillar" method I mentioned earlier. By thinking of Rogue's arms as pillars or columns, it's easier to envision them in forced perspective; then you modify them in the final drawing to resemble human arms. In the final piece, Rogue is flying like a superheroine should—dynamically!

SUPERPUNCH

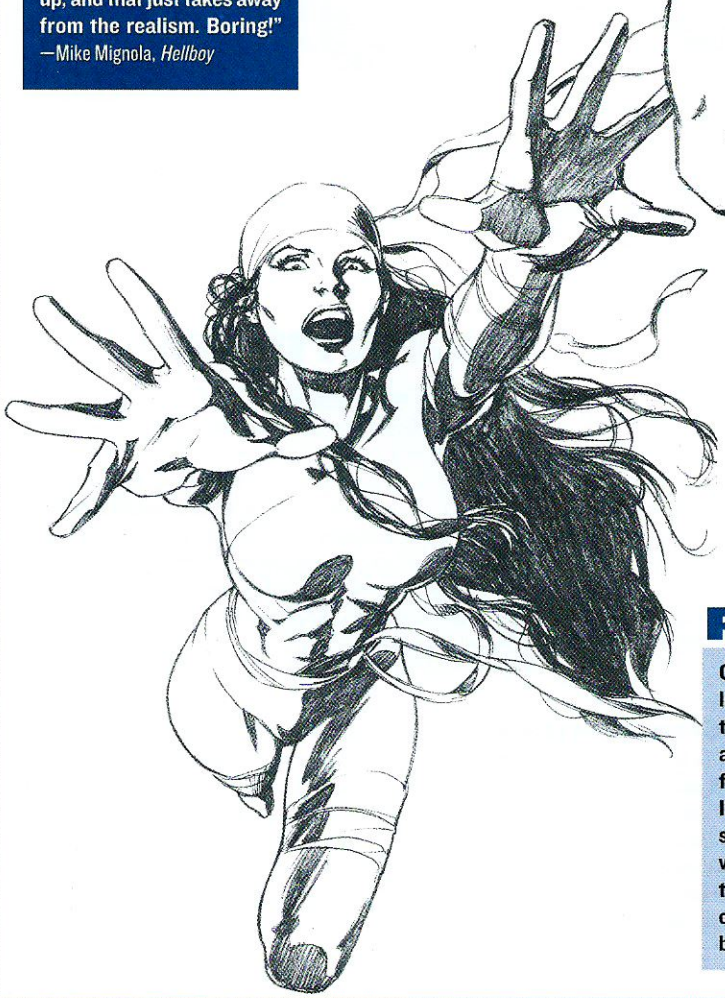
Alright, now that we've mastered foreshortening in one easy lesson, let's practice a few...here's a shot of the King of the Sea himself, Namor, in a shot you'd probably see on a cover or splash page. This shot has the same challenges as the previous one, except it's a little more difficult because he's coming right at us! We simply foreshorten the main figure first, and then foreshorten his left arm separately. Notice how he seems to leap off the page? That's the effect we want, right?



PRO TIPS

KEEP IT REAL

"People groan when I talk about reference, but please bear with me. Lack of visual information is a clear sign that you made everything up, and that just takes away from the realism. Boring!"
—Mike Mignola, *Hellboy*

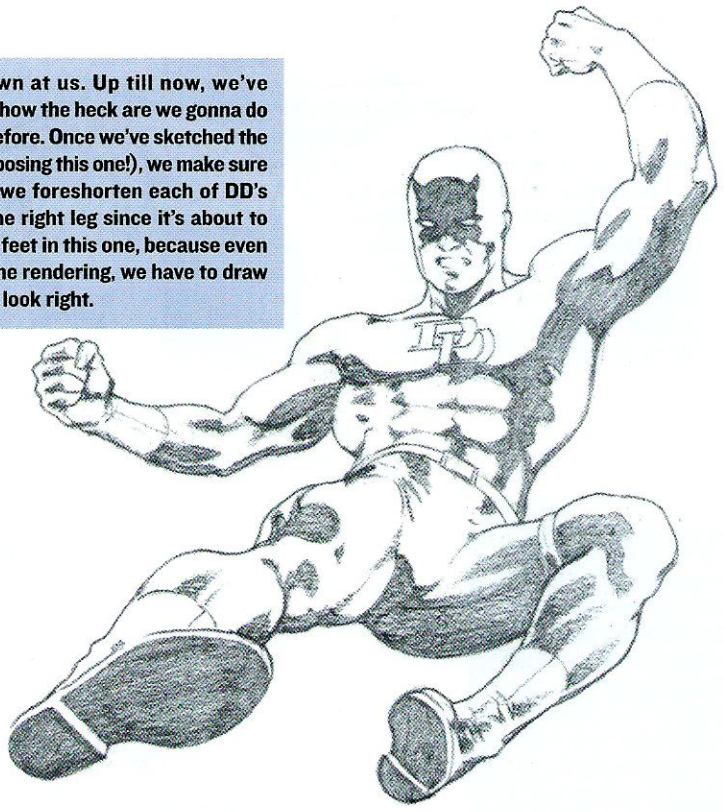


PRATFALL

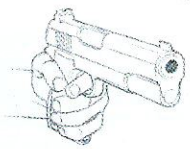
Okay, sure, but what about a shot of someone leaping instead of flying? Well here, it's the pose that's all-important. See how both of Elektra's arms are held out in front of her as if to break her fall? In order to make this shot more involving, I've put Elektra's right hand in front of her shoulder. We still have to draw the entire arm when constructing the figure, but we only have to render the shoulder and hand (which can occasionally be a time-saver). The result? Elektra better have a grappling hook handy.

BLINDSIDE

Here's a toughie—Daredevil swinging down at us. Up till now, we've foreshortened figures from the top down, but how the heck are we gonna do this? Easy—we apply the same principles as before. Once we've sketched the correct pose (the mannequin was a big help in posing this one!), we make sure the torso is in the proper perspective, then we foreshorten each of DD's limbs separately, paying extra attention to the right leg since it's about to kick us in the head. Pay close attention to the feet in this one, because even though we only see the soles of his boots in the rendering, we have to draw the whole foot in the sketch phase to make it look right.







OBJECTIFYME

I think that foreshortening objects dynamically is a mite easier than foreshortening people, mainly because the reader's eye will really notice if a person looks funny or out of perspective. But since most of us aren't walking encyclopedias, artists have a little more leeway when it comes to inanimate objects, like the ones on this page. Also, we can use our spheres/cylinders/cubes technique here, since most objects are basically spheres, cylinders or cubes, and thus a little easier to draw.

DYNAMIC FORESHORTENING can be a very powerful tool, so use it sparingly. You don't want to knock their eyes out in every panel, do you? Balancing dynamism with subtlety will keep the reader turning the pages. Of course, we stand on the shoulders of giants, so if you want to see how the masters did it, start by studying the comic works of the King of Comics, Jack Kirby, or those of Neal Adams and John Romita (Sr. or Jr.!). No matter what style of art you draw—be it illustrative, cartoony or manga-inspired—using dynamic foreshortening will make your stories more thrilling, give them more impact and keep readers coming back for more!

ACTION SCENES BY JIM LEE



One of the chief defining characteristics of superhero comics is action. After all, nobody likes a dull fight scene. So, as artists, it's our job to fully bring forth intense dynamics. It's not as easy as it sounds, though, since we're constantly torn between maintaining a sense of reality and making a scene bigger and bolder than it could ever possibly be.

Now, there are many ways to get the most excitement out of your figurework. But given the space I have in this column, I've narrowed it down to a few important ones that can help bring more zing to your work. So grab a pencil, hit your board and let's go!

STORYARCS

Each figure makes a statement and brings with it a sense of life and movement. While we still have to remember proper anatomy, if we lose the overall flow or arc of a figure's movement, then we lose a lot of that figure's impact and power.

Many artists think of the body as connected parts. That's fine, except by doing that, we sometimes overlook trying to make a general, forceful statement with the figure. Only after we determine a figure's gesture should we break it down into parts. The more we can retain of our initial arc, the more we maximize our figure's dynamics.

You should try to have one or two arcs that define your figure's overall movement or gesture. Establish simple arcs flowing through the shoulders and arms, or through the arc of the legs. The greater the arc, the more energy your figure will have. Notice how **Figure A** has more zing to its step than **Figure B**. Note that the more we simplify our drawings, the more they'll resemble very simple arcs.

FIGURE A

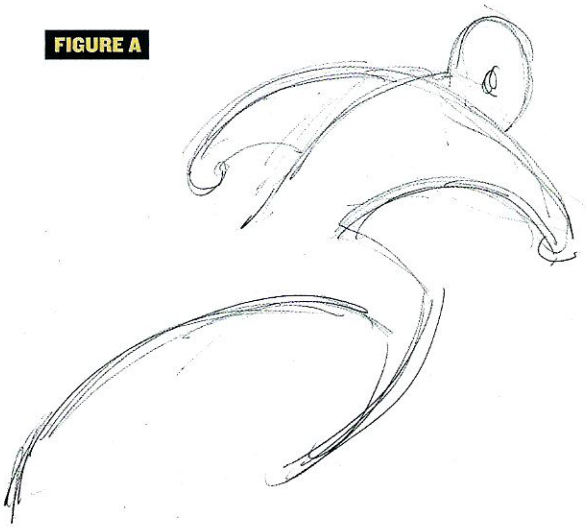
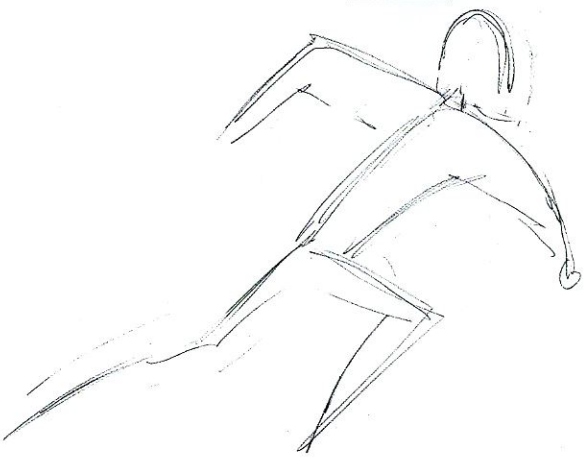


FIGURE B



PRO TIPS

THE RAVE AND THE BOLD

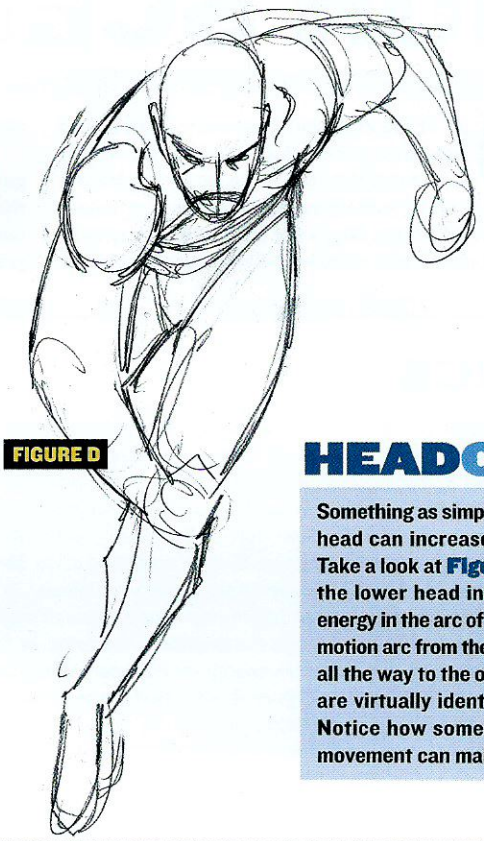
"Many great artists like Jack Kirby and John Buscema accomplished the contradictory task of balancing reality and making the action bolder, and their work has served as the cornerstones of modern American superhero figurework. They never faltered from maintaining a realistic environment, which made the unbelievable that much more believable. Then there's non-comic artist George Bridgman, whose book, *George Bridgman's Guide to Life Drawing*, really unlocked some doors for me as to how the human body twists and turns as a series of connected masses." —Jim Lee, *All Star Batman & Robin*

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FIGURE C



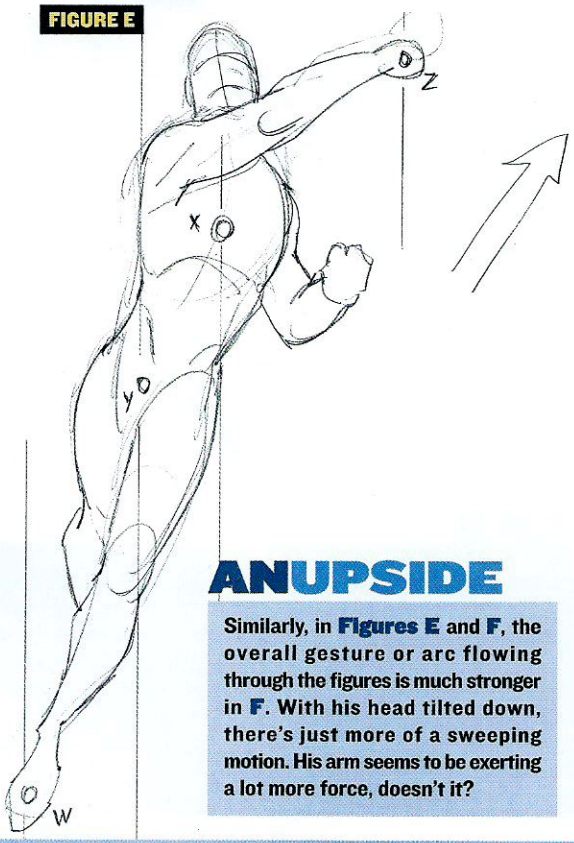
FIGURE D



HEADONDOWN

Something as simple as lowering your figure's head can increase his action dramatically. Take a look at **Figures C** and **D**. Notice how the lower head in **Figure D** creates more energy in the arc of the shoulders, and a better motion arc from the fist through the shoulders all the way to the other fist. The two pictures are virtually identical, except for the head. Notice how something as simple as slight movement can make a big difference.

FIGURE E



ANUPSIDE

Similarly, in **Figures E** and **F**, the overall gesture or arc flowing through the figures is much stronger in **F**. With his head tilted down, there's just more of a sweeping motion. His arm seems to be exerting a lot more force, doesn't it?

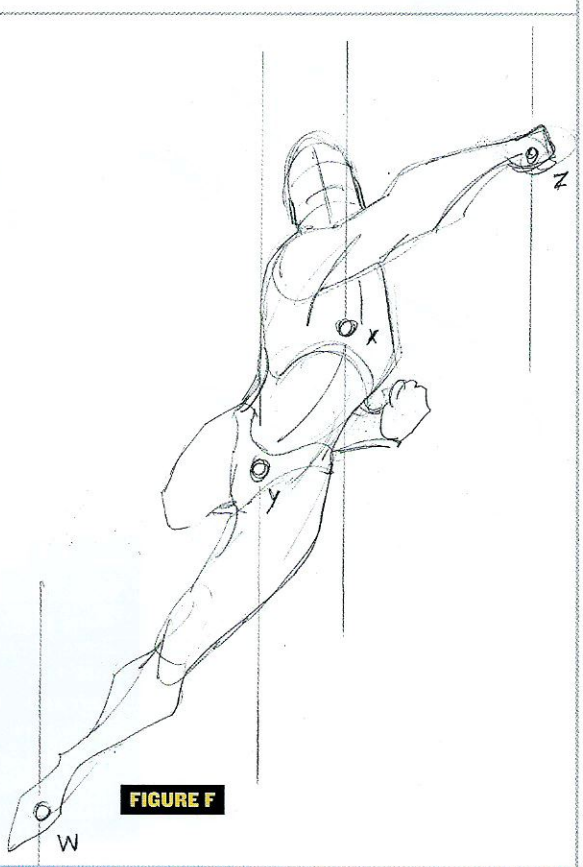
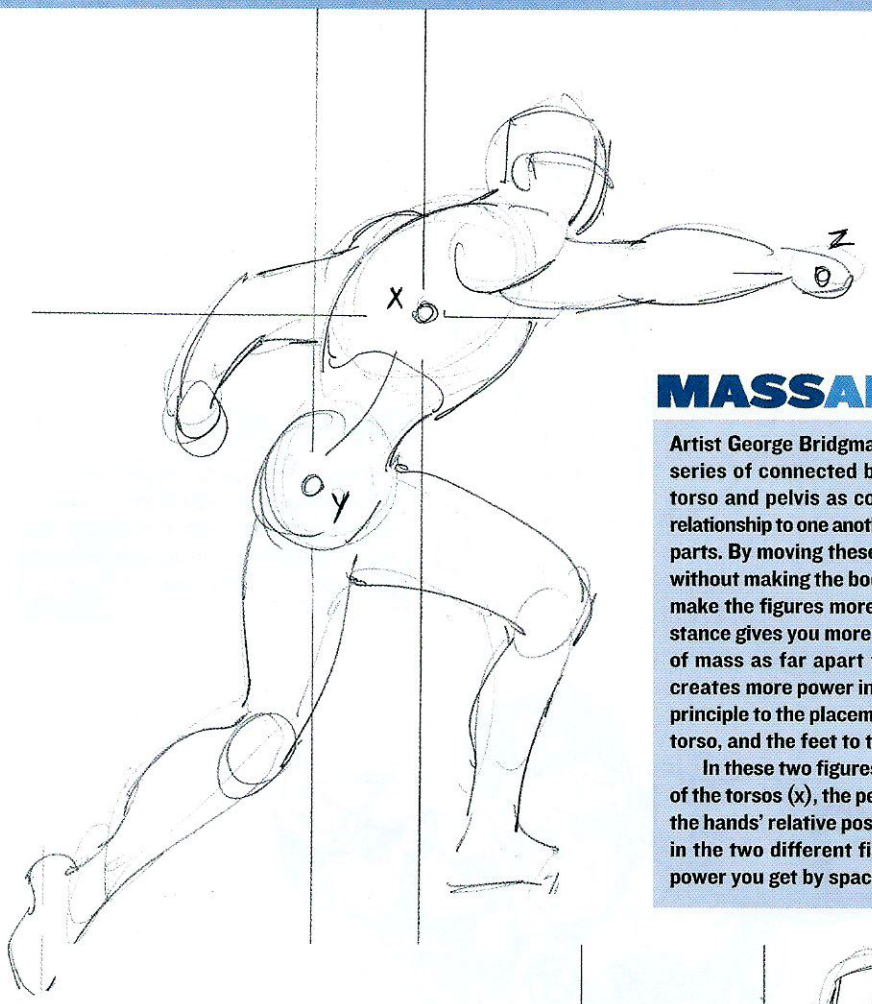


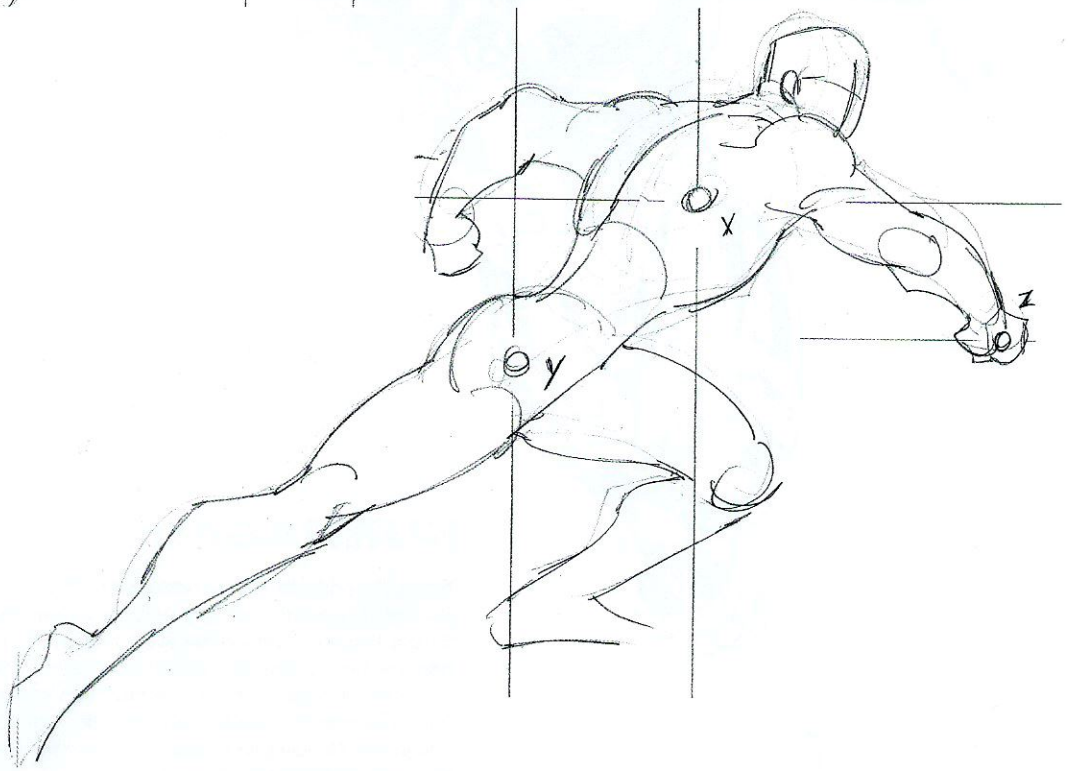
FIGURE F

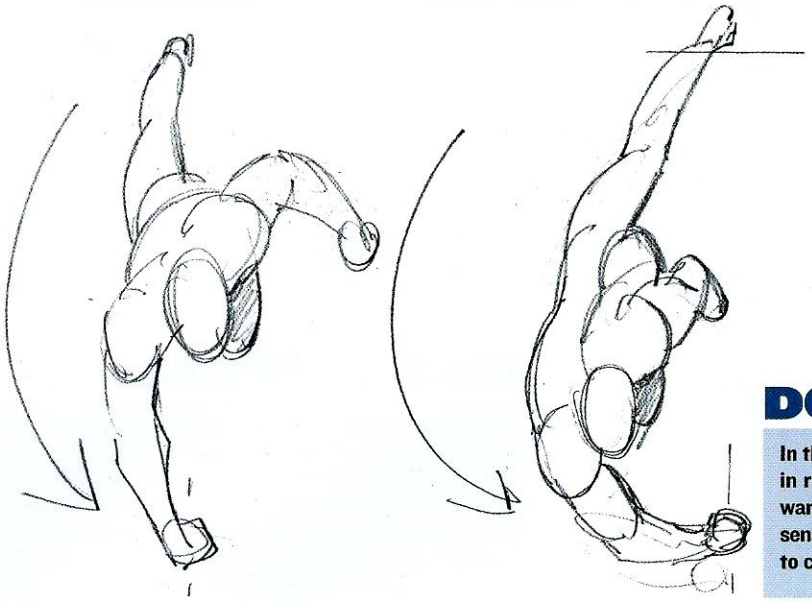


MASSAPPEAL

Artist George Bridgman spoke of the human body as a series of connected body masses. He would take the torso and pelvis as connected units, which rotated in relationship to one another almost as if they were socketed parts. By moving these masses as far apart as possible without making the body seem overly elongated, we can make the figures more dynamic. Just as widening your stance gives you more power, moving the torso's center of mass as far apart from the pelvis' center of mass creates more power in your figure. Now apply the same principle to the placement of the hands in relation to the torso, and the feet to the pelvis.

In these two figures, I've labeled the centers of mass of the torsos (x), the pelvises (y) and the hands (z). Note the hands' relative positions in relation to points x and y in the two different figures and you'll start to see the power you get by spacing your centers of mass out.





DOWNWITHIT

In these figures, you'll see how moving z in relationship to x and y from a downward perspective further accentuates the sense of movement and direction we want to create in our figurework.



BORNAGAIN

Again, the principle of separating the body's different centers of mass helps bring a greater sense of dynamics to your final work. Notice how everything we've talked

SWINGINGMYWAY

Flying characters should be handled very differently from swinging characters, although some similarities remain. Note the position of the Human Torch (**Figure F**). He looks like he's gliding through the air, his head and outstretched arms and hands leading him with determination through the sky. Spider-Man, on the other hand, is swinging from building to building. He leads with his feet, and his arms are stretched out in both directions as he leaves one web behind to use another. He's held aloft not by any ability to float in the air, but by the delicate distribution of weight between his arms and legs, torso and head as he swings. He should look as though he could fall to his doom if his weblines were to suddenly disappear.

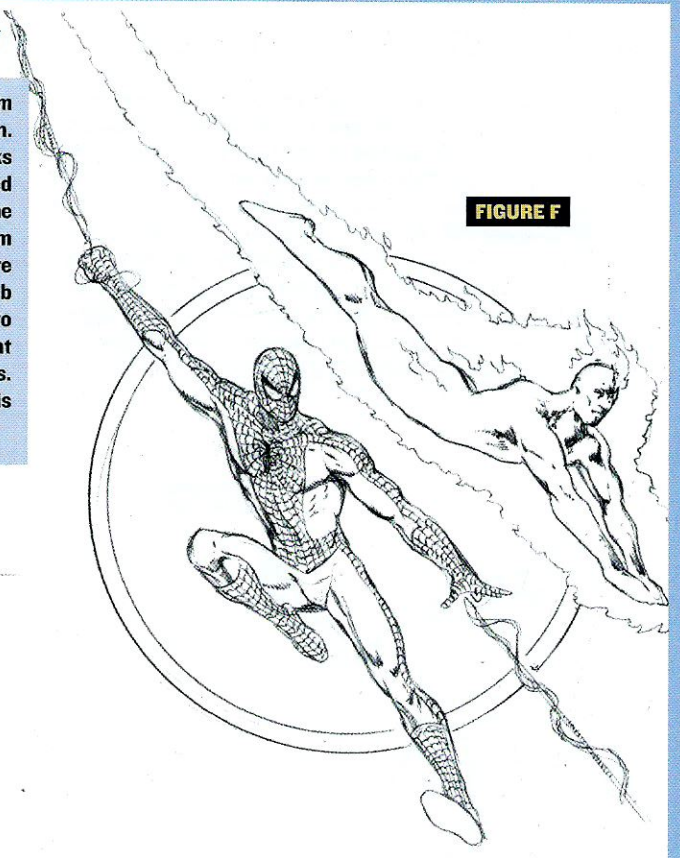


FIGURE F



BREAKINGBORDERS

With Rogue here, we see another example of composition giving us the visual cues we need to believe she's flying—her outstretched arms, hair flying behind her and speed lines all indicate her direction, and the planetary background indicates her environment. Her arcing figure is bold enough to break through the panel borders. This final choice is one a lot of artists like to use, but it also leads to a common compositional mistake many artists use that destroy the illusion of flying...

PRO TIPS

COLLABORATE: GREAT!

"Personally, I've taken the biggest leaps of growth from collaborating—i.e., inking someone's pencils, someone inking my pencils, drawing from someone else's script, and so on. Remember that in a collaboration, it's important to respect everyone's contribution while simultaneously standing strong for your own efforts if you believe in what you're doing." —Mike Allred, *Madman Comics*

ANCHORSAWEIGH

One of the easiest ways to craft the illusion of flight in a comic book is to position the figure in the panel unattached to any panel borders. Notice how Warbird in **Figure G** seems to be floating in midair. This is because she has no anchor—that is, nothing attaches her to the panel border.

But in **Figure H**, Warbird's toes and forearm are cut off. Many artists draw figures that don't quite fit in the panel and cut them off at awkward points on their extremities. Not only are these bad composition choices, but connecting the figure to the panel border destroys the illusion that the figure is free-floating and, therefore, flying in midair.

FIGURE G



FIGURE H



THERIGHTFRAME

Composition is important in other ways here. In **Figure H**, Warbird is posed diagonally—always the best for dynamism in a panel. But she looks awkward, like she's leading with her leg and torso, not her head.

In **Figure G**, Warbird keeps her diagonal composition, but her body is more solidly posed. She looks like she's in control of her arms and muscles, not the other way around. Her head, twisted the opposite way of her legs, is still poised solidly on her shoulders. Even if she was to turn direction in midair, she looks in control.

CAPETOWN

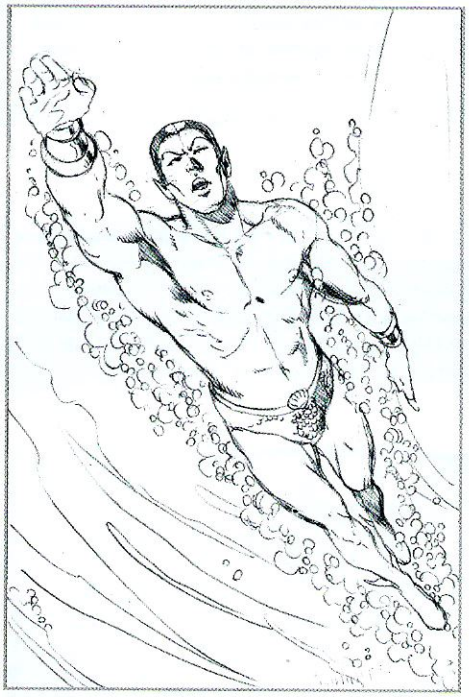
Here's another easy indicator of flight: A billowing cape, like Guardian's to the right, suggests the wind whipping through it, and helps indicate direction and motion. The more dynamic the cape, the more dynamic the figure and the composition (but don't go overboard, and don't connect the cape to the border).



HAIRSPRAY

A character's hair is another great indicator that they are flying, leaping or in motion. The wind pushing through She-Hulk's hair (right) indicates speed and direction, important considerations while crafting the illusion of motion.



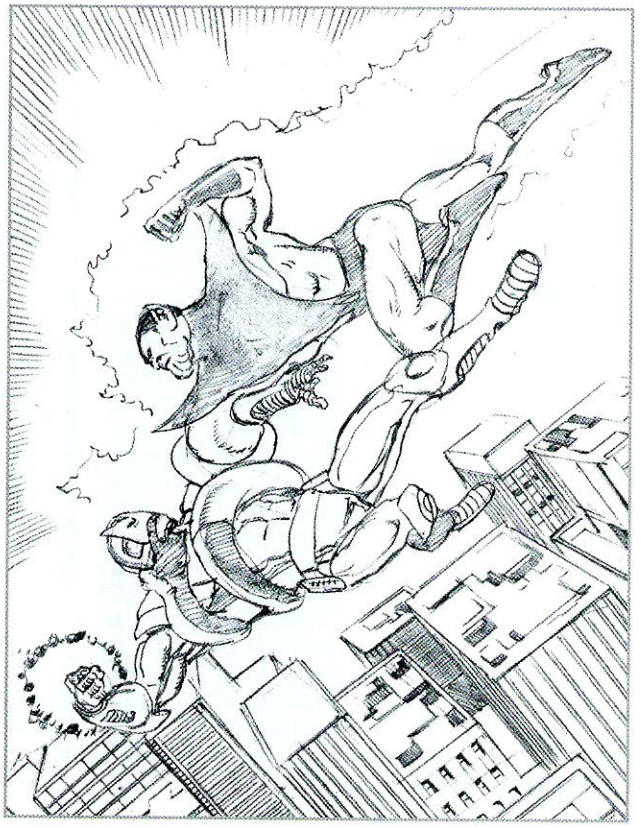


LITTLESWIMMERBOY

A great model for characters flying is characters swimming. The poses, angles, billowing hair, wind- (or water-) whipped cape, diagonal composition and the environment the character is in are all just as applicable to a swimming figure as they are to a flying one. Just something for you and Prince Namor (left) to think about.

AERIALCOMBAT

What about two characters fighting while they're flying? The same rules apply. Composition is key—remove the figures from the panel borders to create the illusion they're floating in midair, like Iron Man and Super-Skrull. Create backgrounds now and then to let us know that the characters are not grounded and, in many cases, are flying hundreds of feet above the Earth. Keep diagonal lines in the panel to create a dynamic composition. And keep the figures' legs flung about—they should never look like they can stand on the ground the minute they're upright! They should look like they're in constant freefall.



I HOPE this was helpful and gets you started thinking about some ways to draw superheroes and their adversaries flying and fighting. I highly recommend a great book, Thomas Easley's *The Figure in Motion*, for great poses and some terrific figures in midair, apparently flying. Also look at any books of dancers with similar photography. They'll really get you thinking about what people would look like if they could really fly...and isn't that why we're in this business anyway, to make people believe just that? (W)

Phil Jimenez has taken flight as both artist and writer in books like DC's Wonder Woman *and DC/Vertigo's* Otherworld, *and as artist on* Infinite Crisis.

ENERGY EFFECTS

BY PHIL JIMENEZ

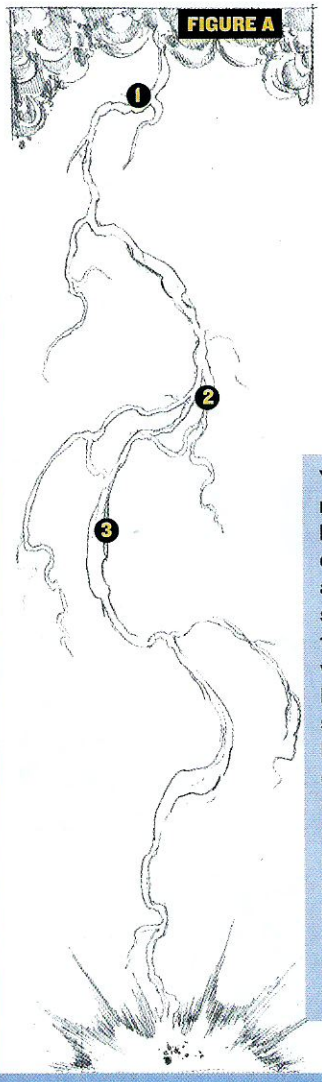
Y'know, during the 13 or so years I've been in comics, I've worked on a variety of characters with powers ranging from optic blasts to the elemental manipulation of the ocean. In that time, I've had to learn how to draw quite a few different types of "energy effects"—from fire to lightning to smoke and beyond—and their effects on the heroes and villains using them. Well, I'm here to suggest a few ways that you can draw these energies.

I can't stress enough, however, how important photo reference was and is to my learning about how these energy patterns really work, and what they look like. I hope you'll whip out those ol' science books and magazines, and check out the photos. Nothing like knowing the reality before drawing the fantasy, I say!

WHITELIGHTNING

Say you're drawing Storm or Thor raining lightning down on some loser supervillain. Keep in mind, lightning never travels in a straight line; it often ripples and splits into smaller (and sometimes larger) bolts along the way. A good way to start is by drawing a single, curvy line to begin the shape of the actual lightning bolt **(Figure A-1)**. Once that's done, go in and add single lines for the tendrils attached **(Figure A-2)**. Space them out any way you wish—cluster them, or add new ones at an even distance from each other. When the first lightning line is finished, add some "weight" to it by drawing another line parallel to the first **(Figure A-3)**, but vary it enough so that parts of the tendril appear thicker in some spots than others. Just keep it moving, with a real "rhythm."

FIGURE A



You should also keep in mind that lightning is a light source, and its effects (like shadows and harsh lighting) should be reflected on the person casting it. The white light of the lightning is best seen splashed across a darker background: I suggest dark storm clouds, which only add to the mood **(Figure B)**. Finally, creating a lightning storm—not just a simple bolt—helps add to the intensity of the effect, and makes the character look more powerful.

FIGURE B



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FIGURE C

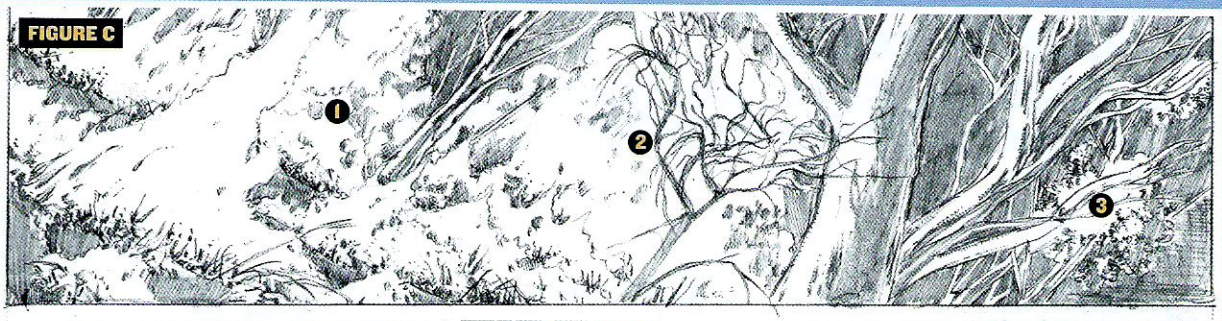
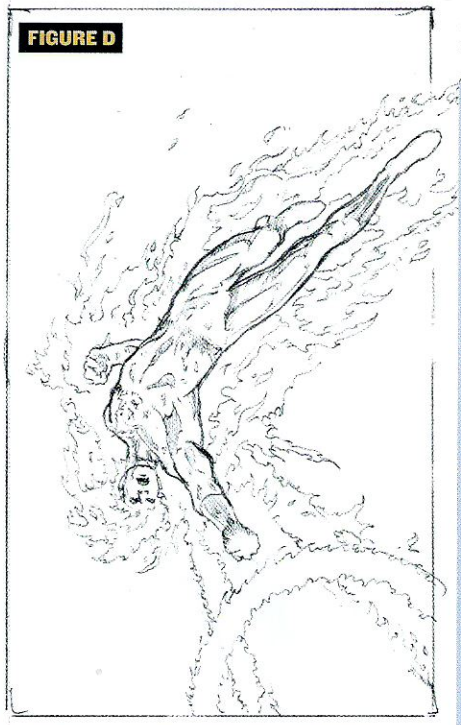


FIGURE D



FIRE IN THE HOLE

There are a couple of ways to approach fire in comics: There's the "cartoon" version, where the fire is defined by a rippling line, or the more "reality-based" version, where the fire is defined by its destruction. I'm a sucker for a combination of both (**Figure C-1**). Fire is a constantly changing object, and your drawing should reflect that. It's also a light source, so think harsh lighting (**Figure C-2**) and heavy shadows (**Figure C-3**).

If you're going to draw "cartoony" fire—like the Human Torch's—use a series of curvy "waves," one in rapid succession of the other, making a jagged pattern (**Figure D**). These little waves should vary in size, and their curls work best when pointing in one direction (**Figure E**).

The more "reality-based" fire is created by drawing the dark areas and patterns of motion an inferno causes: small patches of black, contrasted with white, open areas (**Figure F**). Where the flame is most intense, these smaller "licks" or "swirls" of black help indicate movement (**Figure G**).

FIGURE F

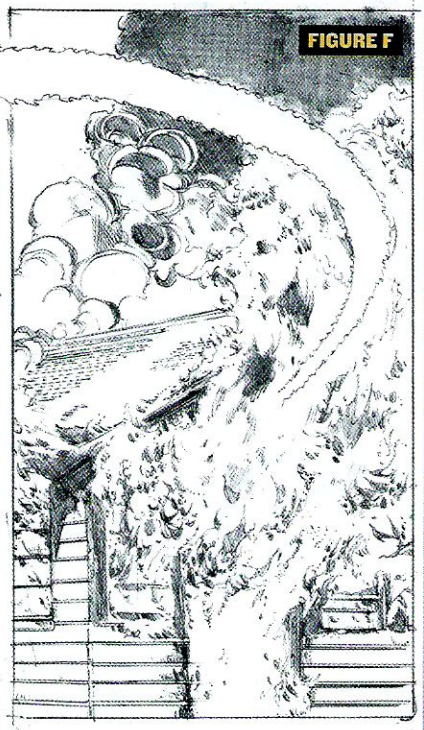


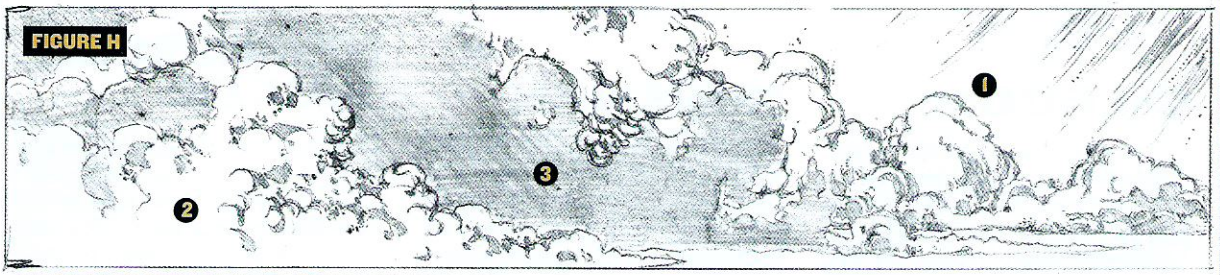
FIGURE E



FIGURE G



FIGURE H



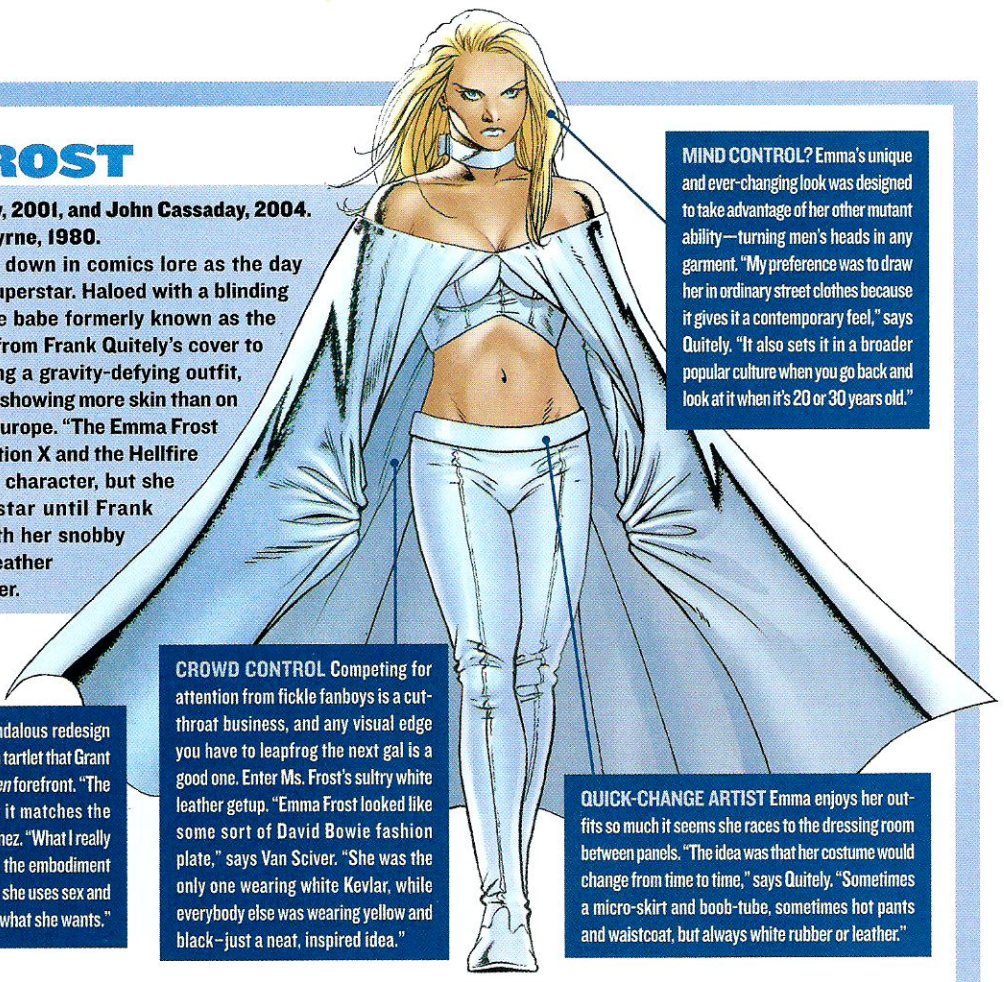
SMOKING SECTION

Another constantly shifting element, smoke can often be exchanged for storm clouds in comics. Just imagine the lumpy consistency of mashed potatoes when you're drawing smoke, and you're on the right track (**Figure H-1**). An easy way to start is by drawing a series of interconnecting circles, all varying greatly in size. After erasing most of the lines where the circles intersect, but still keeping their overall shape, you can go in and add the darker shadows on the circle edges to help define the cloud's shape (**Figure H-2**). Also, smoke is often filled with large areas

EMMAFROST

Redesigns: Frank Quitely, 2001, and John Cassaday, 2004.
Original Design: John Byrne, 1980.

August 22, 2001 will go down in comics lore as the day Emma Frost became a superstar. Haloed with a blinding hot pink background, the babe formerly known as the White Queen gazed out from Frank Quitely's cover to *New X-Men* #116 sporting a gravity-defying outfit, scornfully pouty lips, and showing more skin than on any catwalk this side of Europe. "The Emma Frost before that, with Generation X and the Hellfire Club, was an interesting character, but she never became a superstar until Frank Quitely designed her with her snobby little scandalous white leather costume," says Van Sciver.



MIND CONTROL? Emma's unique and ever-changing look was designed to take advantage of her other mutant ability—turning men's heads in any garment. "My preference was to draw her in ordinary street clothes because it gives it a contemporary feel," says Quitely. "It also sets it in a broader popular culture when you go back and look at it when it's 20 or 30 years old."

CROWD CONTROL Competing for attention from fickle fanboys is a cut-throat business, and any visual edge you have to leapfrog the next gal is a good one. Enter Ms. Frost's sultry white leather getup. "Emma Frost looked like some sort of David Bowie fashion plate," says Van Sciver. "She was the only one wearing white Kevlar, while everybody else was wearing yellow and black–just a neat, inspired idea."

SHE'S ALL THAT Quitely's scandalous redesign perfectly matched the saucy British tartlet that Grant Morrison wrote into the *New X-Men* forefront. "The delight of that costume is that it matches the character's personality," says Jimenez. "What I really like about that costume is that it's the embodiment of the character's aesthetic, where she uses sex and sex appeal, and always has, to get what she wants."

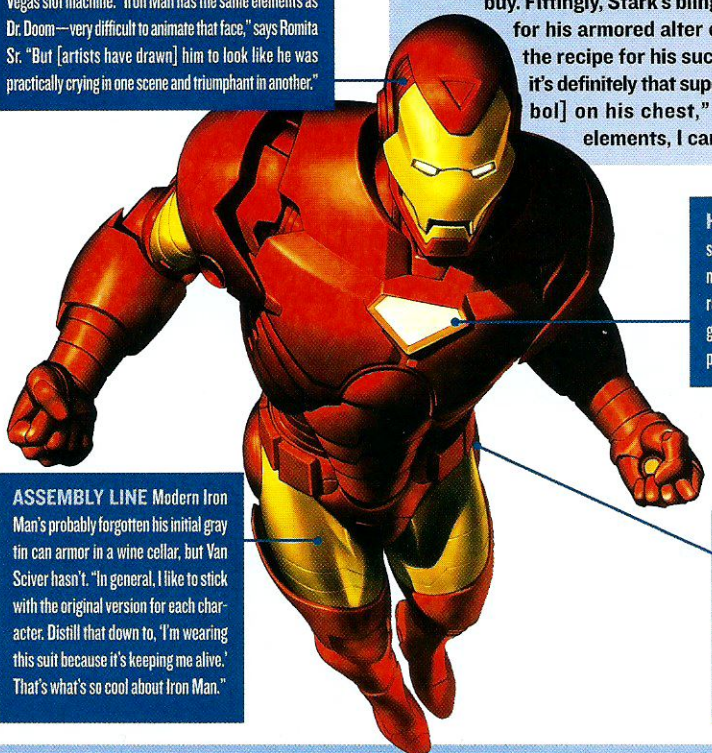
QUICK-CHANGE ARTIST Emma enjoys her outfits so much it seems she races to the dressing room between panels. "The idea was that her costume would change from time to time," says Quitely. "Sometimes a micro-skirt and boob-tube, sometimes hot pants and waistcoat, but always white rubber or leather."

IRONMAN

Original Design: Jack Kirby, Don Heck, Steve Ditko, 1963.

Billionaire Tony Stark's used to getting all the cars, babes and booze that money can buy. Fittingly, Stark's bling is also funneled into the latest costume tweaks for his armored alter ego. While Iron Man's look is fairly open-ended, the recipe for his success has a few key ingredients. "With Iron Man, it's definitely that super-simplified, skull-like face and that glowing [symbol] on his chest," says Van Sciver. "If you show me those two elements, I can definitely point out that it's Iron Man."

MAN IN THE IRON MASK There's only so much emotion you can get from a face that could double as a Vegas slot machine. "Iron Man has the same elements as Dr. Doom—very difficult to animate that face," says Romita Sr. "But [artists have drawn] him to look like he was practically crying in one scene and triumphant in another."



HEART OF THE MATTER In the Marvel Universe, money can't stop writers from continually screwing with your bum ticker. Stark's had more heart problems than the Blob has chin rolls. Luckily, Tony can always rely on the chest-mounted life-support systems of his suit. "[Iron Man's] gotta have some sort of window on his chest that represents his heart problems," says Van Sciver.

ASSEMBLY LINE Modern Iron Man's probably forgotten his initial gray tin can armor in a wine cellar, but Van Sciver hasn't. "In general, I like to stick with the original version for each character. Distill that down to, 'I'm wearing this suit because it's keeping me alive.' That's what's so cool about Iron Man."

METAL MATE Iron Man's armor has saved Tony's hide so many times, it's easy to see the pair as equal partners on Stark's rescue missions. "The costume can be a character, as you know from when they evolved the black Spider-Man costume into a villain," says Romita Sr. "When a costume can be contributing as a character, you've really got something. And I think Iron Man's costume qualifies as a separate character."

DAREDEVIL

Redesign: Wally Wood, 1965. Original Design: Bill Everett, 1964.
A masked man swooping down from the rooftops, protecting the innocent? Not that uncommon in a superhero's line of work. But wearing a gaudy yellow-and-black leotard that would put Elton John to shame? Not exactly the best way to make a fearless, awe-inspiring entrance. Daredevil's classic red threads are a healthy step away from the costume's garish beginnings, leaving a sleek look that is much easier on the eyes—and imaginations—of readers.



CODE RED A rarity in multi-colored pages, DD's monochromatic red costume highlights his "avenging devil" calling card. Readers don't usually think of devils being yellow and black, notes Jimenez. "On some level, he's trying to inspire a touch of fear in the criminals of Hell's Kitchen."

HORNING IN DD's signature cowl, spiced up with two matching devil's horns, has never been one to chuckle at. Creators have carefully chosen to omit other bizarre elements, such as a forked tail, that would have cheapened the sleek design. "The horns on there had nothing to do with the character because he was supposed to be an acrobatic daredevil," says Romita Sr. "But it would've been rather dull without them."

DEVIL IN THE DETAILS DD would be lucky to find enough space to slip a wallet into his skintight duds, let alone space for packing any sort of heat. But what it lacks in pizzazz, this costume more than makes up for in practicality. "It's a fairly simple costume, the classic superhero leotard," says Jimenez. "The more simple the costume and the more graphic, I think they become more iconic."

DOUBLE D'S A pair of double D's at chest level typically demands attention. Here, Daredevil seems to have taken note, adorning himself with a logo that hints at both the character's physical prowess and taste for the occult. "A daredevil is an acrobat, and the fact that the word devil influenced the elements of design is amazing," says Romita Sr.

DR. STRANGE

Original Design: Steve Ditko, 1963.
If this were the 1960s, Dr. Strange would be one happening cat. Co-creator Steve Ditko's design for the Sorcerer Supreme was both outlandish and had the counterculture look that was adored in the freewheeling '60s. While the sheer number of elements densely packed into the costume is staggering, it also boasts a mystical elegance befitting the heroic wizard underneath the robes. "The whole thing was like a musical composition with all the right notes," says Romita Sr.



SUNNY DELIGHT No one will accuse Dr. Strange of being a sunny, warm-hearted trickster, but a darker costume could easily have made him an eerie magician, contentedly muttering to himself in a corner. "[His costume] covers everything and makes him very decorative, which is a great accomplishment because he could have been a brooding, shadowy character," says Romita Sr.

STYLIN' SASH Does Dr. Strange even need a belt if he can just use magic to hold his trousers up? He probably reasoned it was better to be safe rather than sorry, going with a colorful sash. "The fact that he had the belt that ties and flows around [makes] it look like a medieval costume, but it looks modern, and it just looks amazing," says Romita Sr.

OUT OF THIS WORLD Ditko, who concocted the looks for Spider-Man and the Creeper among others, took some daring chances with Dr. Strange, who's part magician and part wacky science project. "Dr. Strange is the most original, creative departure from reality that I have ever seen on paper, outside of some of Kirby's grander characters like Galactus," says Romita Sr. "He's out of this world because it was decorative, but he still had a wizard look about him."

ALIEN WIZARDRY When recalling the costume, Quitely calls Dr. Strange out on his "psychedelic Dracula" look, mixing something otherworldy with a traditional wizard style. "It makes sense when you take all these elements of favorite characters, but surely the danger is like taking all your favorite foods and putting them in a blender and expecting to get the best meal ever."

DESIGNING COSTUMES

BY CHRISCROSS

Hey fans! What's up? The guys here at *Wizard* magazine asked me to cover a subject that every professional artist will have to do at least once: redesigning characters and costumes! I've asked some friends of mine from the *Captain Marvel* comic to do a little modeling for me and on with the lesson...

MOON MAKEOVER

Whoever designed Moondragon's old costume **(Figure A)** obviously wanted to see more skin than just on homegirl's head. This costume is definitely a '70s throwback, what with the retro cape, gloves, boots and homegirl earrings. And since she's never gone fishing, what's with the windsail behind her head?

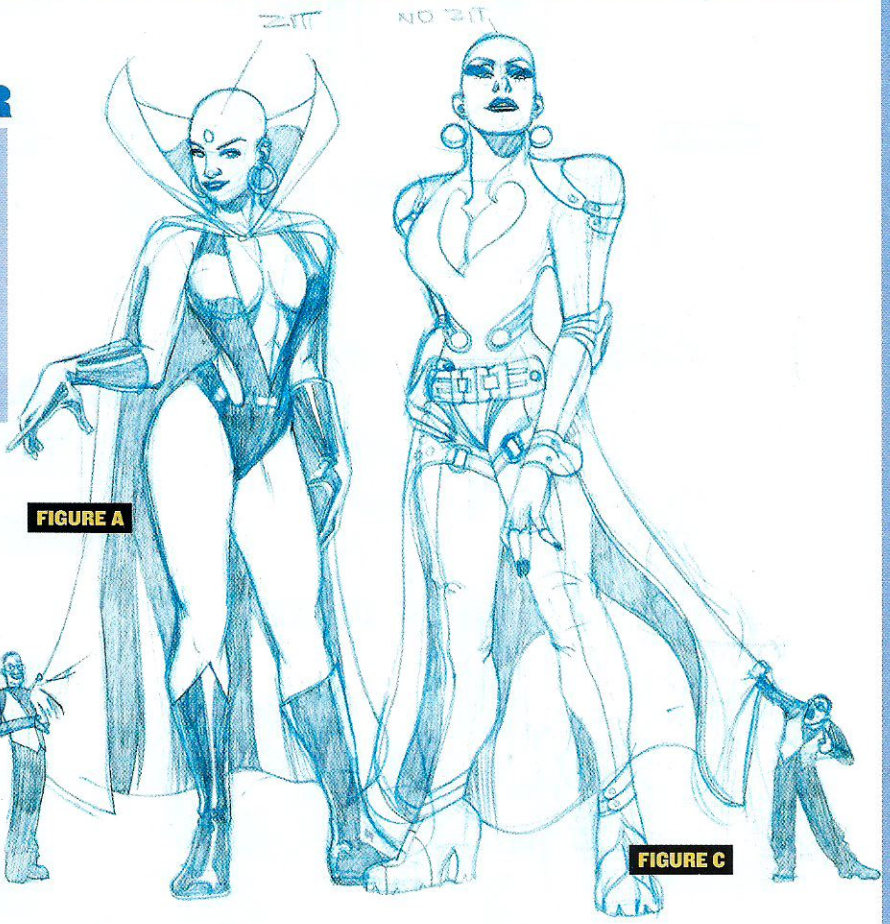


FIGURE A

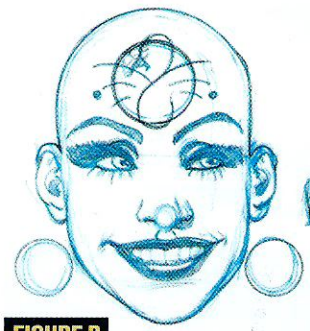


FIGURE B

FIGURE C

BALDIS BEAUTIFUL

In this close-up **(Figure B)**, you'll notice Moonie's follicly challenged—and that's cool, yo! So to enhance her features, I gave her thicker eyelashes. Instead of earrings, I gave her holographic moons hovering near her ears. For a final touch, check out that tattoo made of light that forms on her forehead when she uses her powers. Neat, huh?

NEWMOON

Enter the new Moondragon **(Figure C)**! I see Moonie as a force of nature, so snow white was a good color for her. Shoulder, elbow and knee pads and rugged-yet-stylish boots added a simple, sexy alternative to belt pouches. (Remember those?) Moonie's heart-shaped, low-cut front shows enough of "Cleveland" without being nasty. Finally, I added a hip-cape of my design to cover her puh-puh-paraphernalia.

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FIGURE D

FIGURE E

COMET VOMIT

Comet Man—another brother sorely in need of a makeover. Someone must have thought "Comet Man" was Yiddish for "sleep," 'cause they put my man in pajamas with some baby vomit trailin' across his chest (Figure D)! For this redesign, I came up with something "space-paramilitary"—black, leather armor fastened with bolts, funky boots and gloves and a Gestapo-style high collar (Figure E). Note my new, stylish comet logo design, and once again, the hip-cape. I'm gonna milk it for all it's worth!

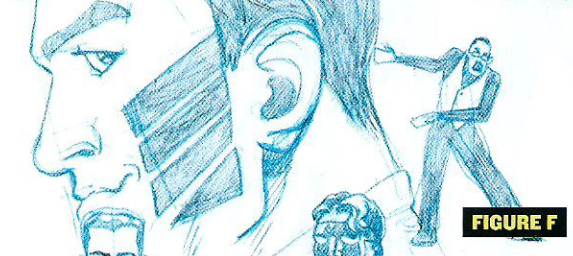


FIGURE F

CLEANCUT

This profile (Figure F) shows how I cut and styled Comet Man's hair, giving him a cleaner look. And the military tattoo on his left cheek denotes rank and a sense of military culture.



FIGURE G

FIGURE H

FIGURE I

SOUR GRAPES

Purple Man (Figure G). Sigh. You ever get the feeling people just stop trying? No wonder he was evil and manipulating people—he was trying to find some fashion! I came up with a new, simple costume—it's loosely fit; a costume doesn't always have to be painted on to look "fly." And I, er, borrowed a design from "King" Kirby's Black Bolt for the chest design (Figure H). Then I added a funky face mask (Figure I).

'80sCHIC

Ladeez and gentlemen, the star of our show, Captain Marvel! This was his debut look (**Figure J**), designed by Eric Benes—who's a great designer in his own right. But I think it didn't go off too well because it was a retro '80s look for a '90s character. Not to mention in the early '90s everybody thought the zenith of studliness was a jacket and ponytail. Thank God that's over.



FIGURE J

THE NEWSTYLE

Enter the new Cap Marv (**Figure K**), designed by Carlos Pacheco [in *Avengers Forever*]. Pacheco has a flair for mixing nostalgia with current sensibilities: He gave Genis his pop's costume, and the added cosmic awareness "star effect" makes him even cooler. The hair is George Clooney. I applaud. I have no ego about duplicating another's genius. If it ain't broke, don't fix it—that's a lesson some artists could learn.



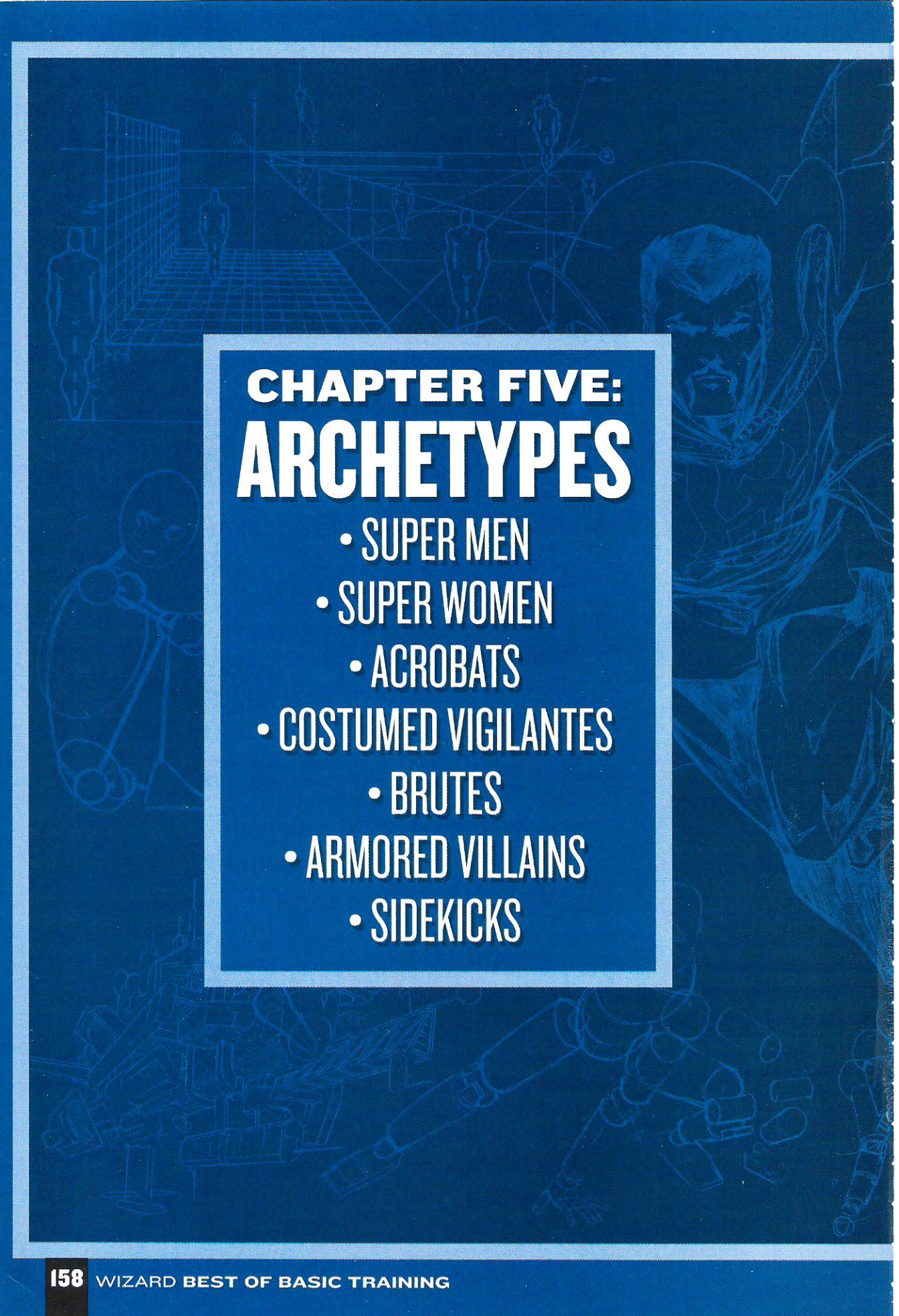
FIGURE K

FUTURETAKE

Finally, I've been challenged by the powers-that-be to redesign Cap'n Marvel in my image. This is what I came up with: a little "Dragonball Z," a little Kirby, a little *Bastard!!* (not the fatherless wonder or the expletive, but a manga) and—Wham! There he be (**Figure L**)! What'cha think, Cap?

Artist ChrisCross has redesigned some of the best in works such as Marvel's Captain Marvel *and DC's* Outsiders.

FIGURE L



CHAPTER FIVE:
ARCHETYPES

- SUPER MEN
- SUPER WOMEN
- ACROBATS
- COSTUMED VIGILANTES
- BRUTES
- ARMORED VILLAINS
- SIDEKICKS

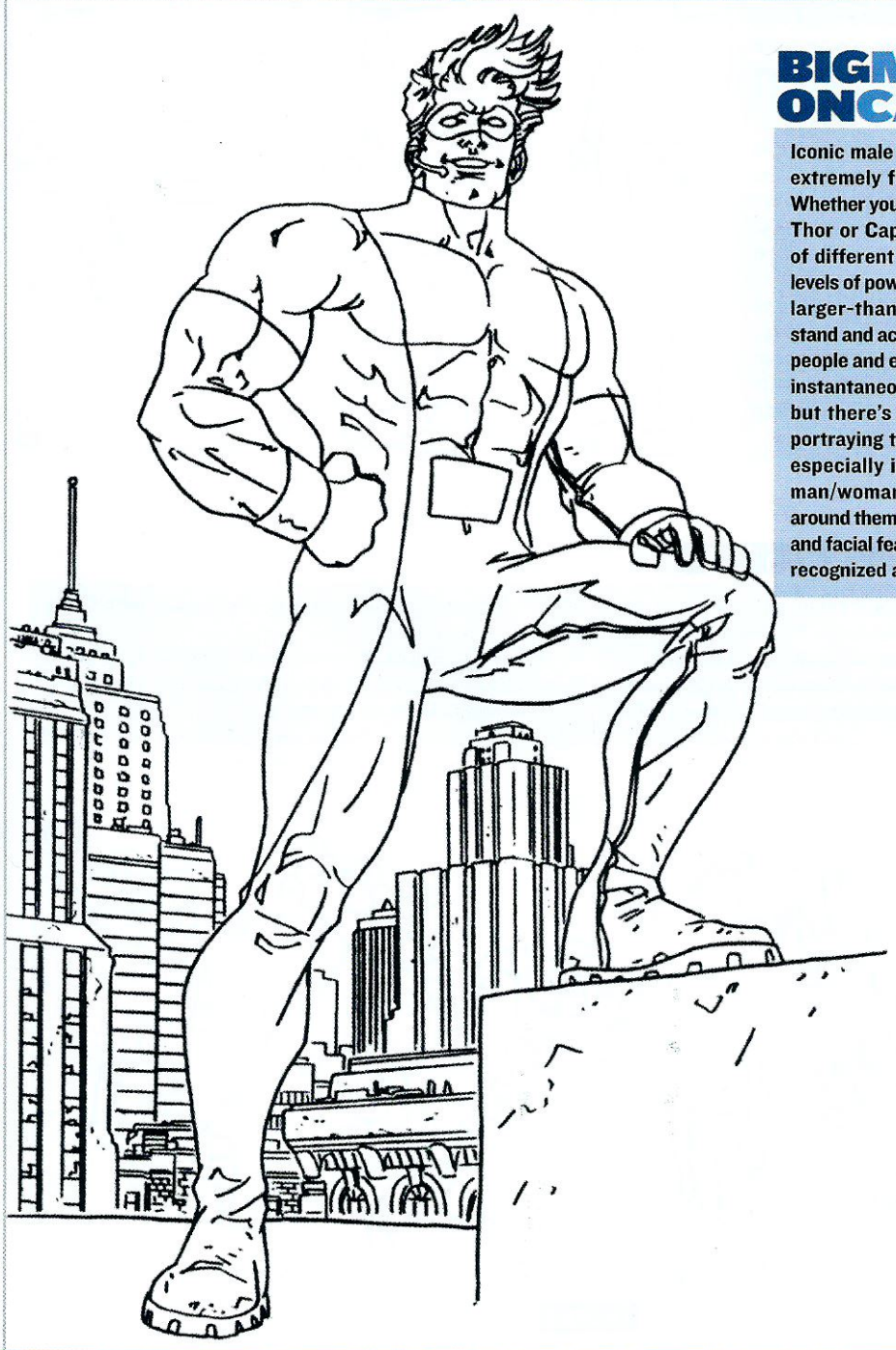
SUPER MEN

BY SCOTT KOLINS



Greetings, everyone. Scott Kolins here! I've penciled lots of big guys in my comic career—plus plenty of rogues and guest stars while doing *The Flash* and too many characters to name on *Marvel Team-Up*—so I definitely have a few things to say on the topic of "super men."

You know, the big guys that not only save the day, but usually the whole world! They are core to this industry, and knowing how to draw them is essential for any mainstream comic book artist. So let's take a closer look at these *uber* heroes and how they work visually.



BIGMAN ONCAMPUS

Iconic male superheroes are generally extremely fit and impressive-looking. Whether you're talking about Superman, Thor or Captain America—regardless of different outfits and even different levels of power—they all exude the same larger-than-life qualities. They look, stand and act in a fashion that impresses people and exudes confidence and trust instantaneously. It may seem obvious, but there's a lot to think about when portraying these kind of noble heroes, especially in contrast to the average man/woman or other types of heroes around them. Their builds, poise, muscles and facial features are unmistakable and recognized around the world.

ALL CHARACTERS ™ & © THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS. PHOTO: SCOTT KOLINS.

BUILDING THE PERFECT MAN

These characters must perform incredible feats and make the impossible look natural. Their size alone must grant their actions an inherent believability. They must look like they are up to the task at hand!

In **Figure A**, we have a semi-realistic hero in proportion and overall size, yet still he's remarkable. This size may be more fitting for a street hero. Enough poise and muscle may still convince the reader this character could lift a car or swing across the city. This hero clocks in at 6' tall, about 7 heads high and 3 heads wide.

In **Figure B**, we go with a more exaggerated and obviously more powerful form. This is the standard size of a Superman or Thor. Note the larger hands and feet, large barrel chest and smaller head size. This hero is 6' 6" tall, about 8 heads high and 4 heads wide.

Figure C goes beyond the norm and becomes monstrous. This body type loses some connection to a natural human form, but can be used effectively for extreme levels of power. It's about 8' tall, about 7 1/2 heads high and 4 heads wide.

FIGURE A

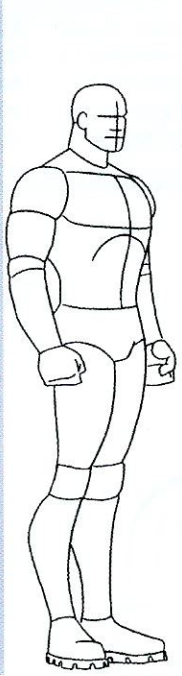


FIGURE B

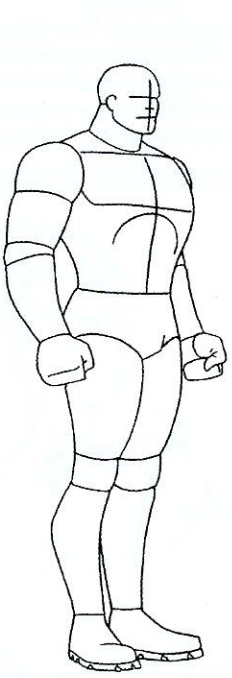
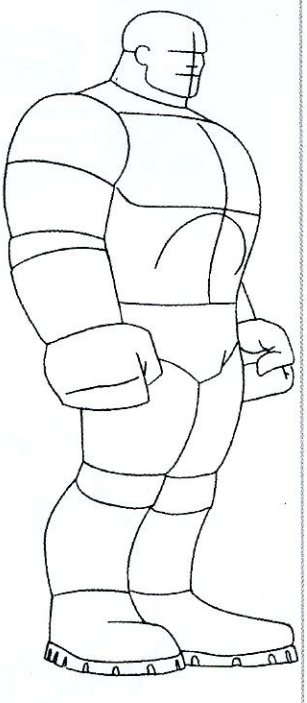


FIGURE C



POISED TO STRIKE

The attitude emanating from a character's stance strongly plays into his believability and attractiveness. These characters exude grace and strength whether standing, sitting or punching.

In **Figure D**, we don't have so many heroic-looking poses. Depressing, unbalanced or feminine poses like these defeat any attempt to convince a reader of the male hero being awe-inspiring.

However, in **Figure E**, you can see the power of the pose. Energetic, balanced and masculine poses like these are convincing and bring admiration to our super men.

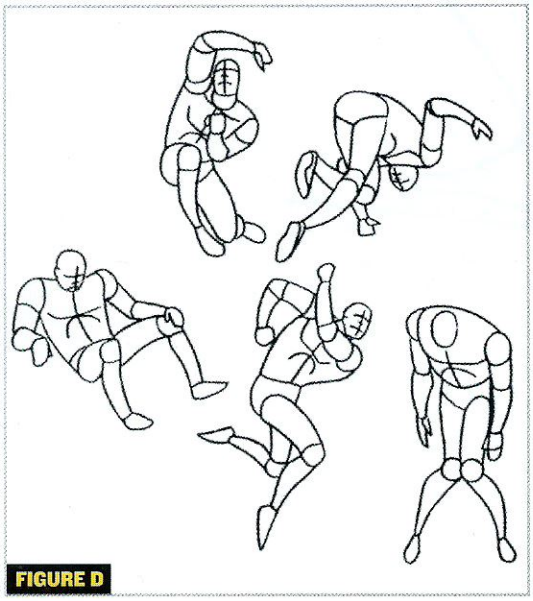


FIGURE D

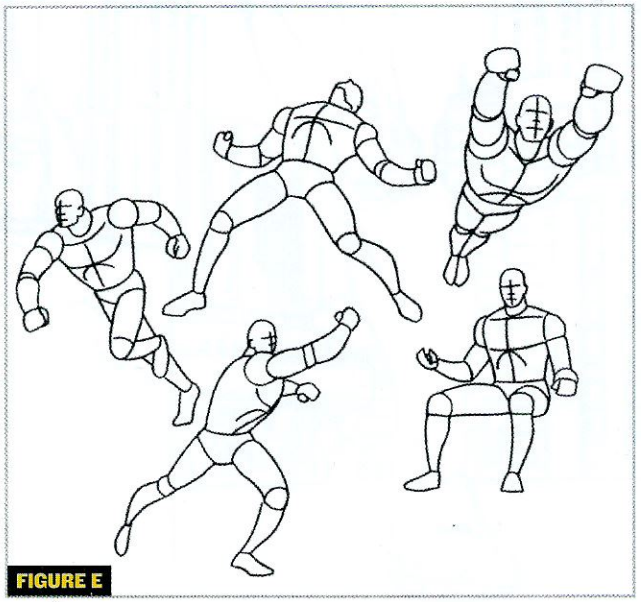


FIGURE E

MUSCLELAYERS

This is icing on the cake. The detail of muscles should be sensible; enough to embolden our hero, while avoiding a skinless anatomy-lesson look. Pay more attention to the muscles that are flexing or are most notable with light and shadow. Ironically, the more you know, the less you actually draw.

Figure F shows enough separation of major muscles with the hint of veins and/or striations to convince the reader of the character's power. You get the feeling of the character's strength, while still allowing for the continuance and flow of story.

Figure G is over the top. This figure becomes a sideshow freak that stops the story dead and, at best, only inspires morbid curiosity.



FIGURE F

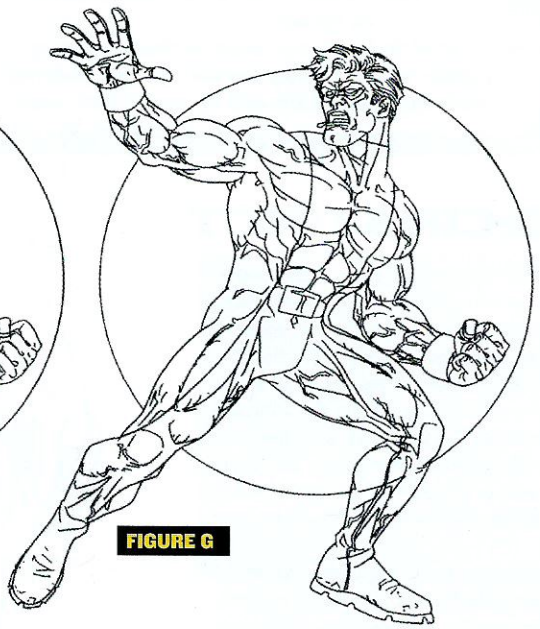


FIGURE G

FACETHEFACTS

The face is a very important part of your drawing. It communicates the personality and strength of the character. It's how you really know your hero.

Let's look at **Figure H**. It's the iconic hero face—front, side and angle. Note the eye placement, size of nose, strong cheeks and chin, and slightly less forehead still allowing for a recognizable face and expressiveness.

In **Figure I**, I've drawn various typical expressions of the ideal hero. Not wild or crazy; this likeable yet determined hero rises above the chaos to show us the way.

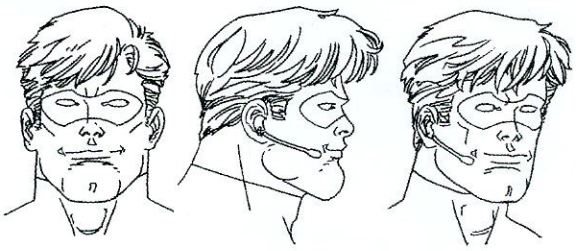


FIGURE H



FIGURE I

THERE ARE OTHER IMPORTANT VISUAL TRAITS to the noble superhero (clothing, color scheme, powers and uniqueness), but this "how to" covers enough to get you started. The main thing to remember is to get into the character's head and heart. Once you figure out who the character is, you are sure to know how the character looks. Good luck!

With work on DC's The Flash *and Marvel's* Marvel Team-Up, *Scott Kolins puts the "super" in "superhero" every chance he gets.*

SUPER WOMEN

BY DON KRAMER



Some of the most popular characters in comics today are female. Maybe it has something to do with our male-dominated industry's obsession with sexy women, or perhaps our female superheroines provide untapped fertile ground for great female-driven stories. I don't know, I'm just a comic book artist. (But my bet is on the former.)

Of all the female characters out there, few are more popular than the "super woman." Strong, assertive, confident, beautiful and with the biggest bust outside of California; no wonder that character type is a favorite among comic-book fandom.

As the artist on *JSA*, I was fortunate enough to draw superpowered women for several years. For any aspiring artist out there, let me give you some of the finer points I've learned while drawing characters like Power Girl and Wonder Woman. Here's my first hint: It's not about the boobs. Leave that circle template alone.

So grab your pencil and let's get started.

BASICINSTINCT

In order to draw a character, you must understand his or her personality. Super women basically represent the alpha female—strong, aggressive, confident. She becomes the center of attention in any room she enters. She is willing to take control of any situation she finds herself in. She is self-assured and confident to the point of arrogance. She fears nothing and will lead the charge into any battle. All men want her, and all women want to be her.

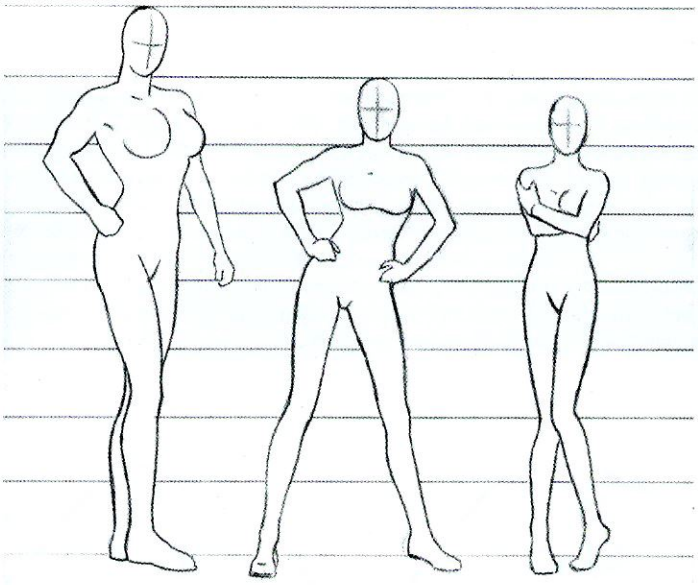
Physically, she is stunningly beautiful, knows it, but never feels the need to flaunt it, so ignore the more suggestive, boy-toy poses. Her stance is always poised, confident and commanding of respect (or at least your attention).

She is serious and tough while retaining her charm and sexiness. She is capable of kicking some serious tail, so she should appear in shape and muscular, though not overly muscled or she will lose some of her femininity. It can be a tough balance to strive for if you wish to maintain that powerhouse look.

With this personality in mind, a clearer picture should form as to how she should look.

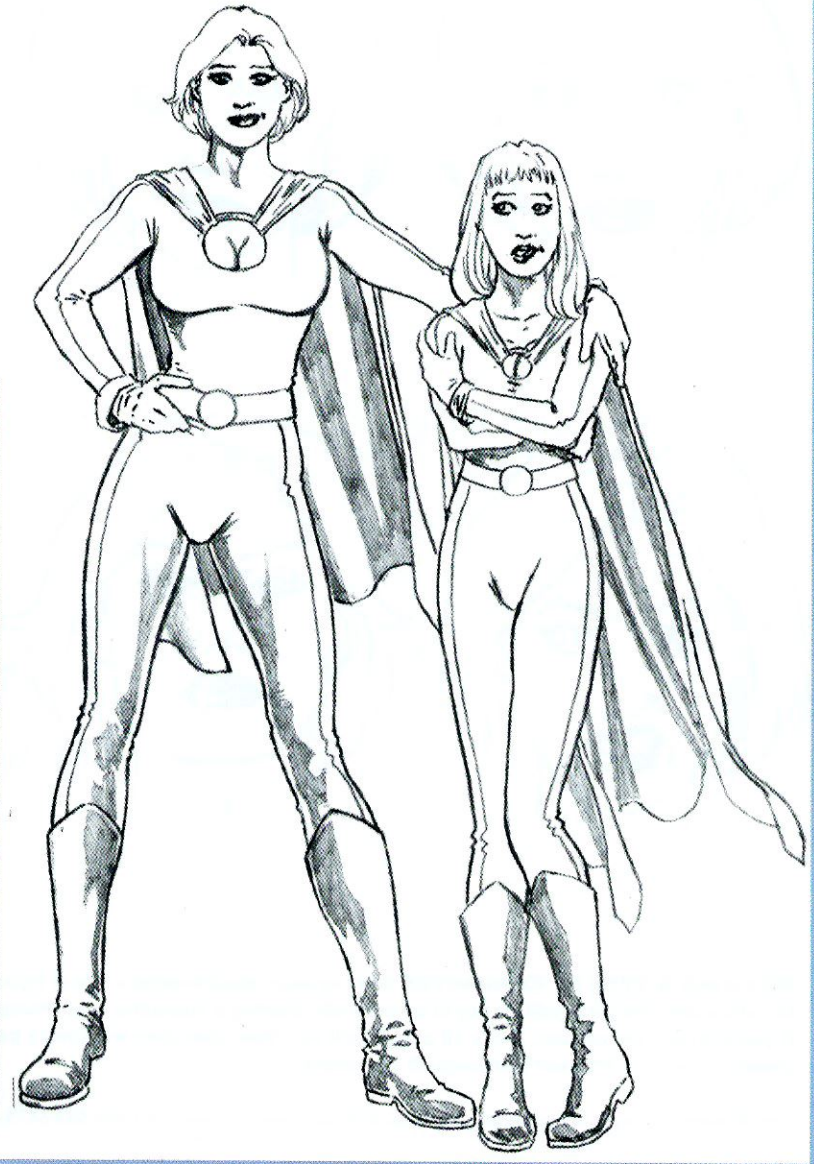


PHOTO: DON KRAMER.



RACK'EMUP

This is not your average woman, so she should not have the average body. Her body should match her personality. She should be taller, more muscular, curvier and sexier than the average female. With that in mind, yes, she is more likely to have larger breasts, as shown in the figure on the left. The middle figure represents the slightly more average superheroine, *a la* Black Widow or Catwoman. The figure on the right depicts the average female. She's feeling slightly inferior standing next to these women.



SIDEBYSIDE

For the most part, a super woman's body language will vary depending on the situation she is in. Every scene is different, and her body language and facial expressions will represent what the scene calls for.

However, the way she carries herself should reflect her personality. She should carry herself with a great sense of dignity, confidence and strength. Typically, her posture is perfect. She should always appear in control of herself, even when the situation is out of control.

Notice the figure on the left standing in a much more confident, self-assured manner than the one on the right. Her feet are shoulder-width apart, providing her with a solid base; placing her hand on her hip gives her a little attitude and an appearance of self-confidence. By contrast, the figure on the right appears much more unsure of herself standing next to such a woman. Her arms crossed in front of her and knees bowed inward give her an appearance of insecurity. It is obvious from her body language that she feels inferior next to her mentor.

ABOUTFACE

Obviously, her face should be gorgeous and her facial expressions are indicative of the situation she is placed in. However, her typical look should represent one of self-control and seriousness (as in the face on the upper left). Her look should often exude a dignity and self-confidence to the point of arrogance, as in the face on the middle bottom. She is a proud woman, so this look is a staple of the superpowered woman.

Her facial expressions should be indicative of her self-control. Where other characters that cannot control their emotions will fly off the handle with extreme facial expressions, the alpha female does not. She maintains her composure and remains quite reserved. For example, she will show anger, but rarely will she show rage as in the two faces on the far right. It would take one serious situation to cause this woman to lose control. With this character, the turmoil is internalized and should only register slightly. There is a fine line to drawing facial expressions on such a character. Too reserved and the character becomes wooden and loses personality; too extreme and she is no longer the self-confident character we have strived to create.



DRAWING A TYPE OF CHARACTER is not so much about drawing a type of figure as it is about drawing a type of personality. Understanding the personality is key to successfully creating a character type. Honestly, it's not about the size of the boobs. If you concentrate on that, that's all people will see. Your character will simply be a showcase for her endowments. To truly create a character, it's what's underneath that counts.

Don Kramer bulks up his superior portfolio, and his super women, on titles like DC's JSA *and* 52.

ACROBATS

BY ADRIAN ALPHONA



Hi, everyone. To those who don't know me, I'm the fellow who drew *Runaways* for Marvel, a book that gives me the opportunity to draw lots of different scenes, from dialogue and romance to action and comedy. Anyways, some of that experience came in handy when the kind folks at *Wizard* asked me to do a mini-tutorial on conveying the nuts and bolts of drawing the acrobatic, flexible type of hero. (Think Spider-Man.) I had a lot of fun with this lesson, and I hope a few of you might be able to pick up a few things from these three pages and apply them to your own work.

GOWITHTHEFLOW

With acrobatic, flexible heroes, it's all about exaggerated poses, so it's a good idea to practice your gestures and get a natural flow going. Try to be as quick and loose as possible and keep the focus on the pose and not the details. In the words of Bruce Lee: "Don't think, feeeeeel."

A lean physique usually works best for the acrobatic, flexible character. But it's really up to you what body type(s) you want to work with. Here are some examples below.



THERUNNINGMAN

It's best to practice from life whenever you can. Don't worry about getting the "likeness" of your subject right, just worry about making it a good drawing by itself.

This running man is just a little example of getting the most out of a pose. 'A' is looking kinda stiff, while 'C' is getting more dynamic. 'E' goes too far...maybe.

FIGURE A FIGURE B FIGURE C FIGURE D FIGURE E



EXAGGERATIONAGENDA

The relationship between body language and character is very important, and from exaggerated poses come exaggerated characters. In this case, all of these guys are bouncy, energetic types. When starting off, I loosely drop very basic lines that indicate movement. I usually start with the center line, or spine. Anatomical correctness isn't something I'm thinking about yet. That will come as I "flesh out" the rest of the figure on top of the basic lines in the same way a sculptor adds clay to an armature, only instead of clay I'm just scribbling. Again, if you worry about the details too soon, the stiffer and more unnatural your character will look. So have fun with it!

I'll be the first to admit that these examples look really, really goofy, but hopefully you can tell a lot about the characters just by looking at them and their kooky poses.



EXPRESSIONS

In keeping with the theme of exaggeration, try to be loose and whimsical when dropping the breakdowns for expressions. Just let it flow.

Not really sure how to pull off an expression? Act it out. It's fun, if a little embarrassing. A small mirror kept by your drawing table may come in handy. (I also use a mirror to look at my art as I'm working on it. It's a good way to spot mistakes.) Body and hand gestures go a long way in adding to a facial expression, as they help to hammer a point home.

Of course, if you're working with a script, you need to keep it in mind. You don't want to go over the top if the story calls for subtlety. The goal is for people to feel the mood/vibe of a scene without necessarily having to read what the characters are saying. What exactly did Super Drama Gossip Queen whisper to Blind Bunny Rabbit Ninja Man? I have no idea, but he doesn't look too happy.





I REALLY HOPE I didn't sound like some know-it-all, especially since I'm not exactly a veteran at this. But, hopefully there was a little tidbit of info here that you can use to make your acrobats leap off the page.

Adrian Alphona has stretched his creative muscles on Marvel's Runaways *and Udon's* Street Fighter.

COSTUMED VIGILANTES

BY SCOTT McDANIEL

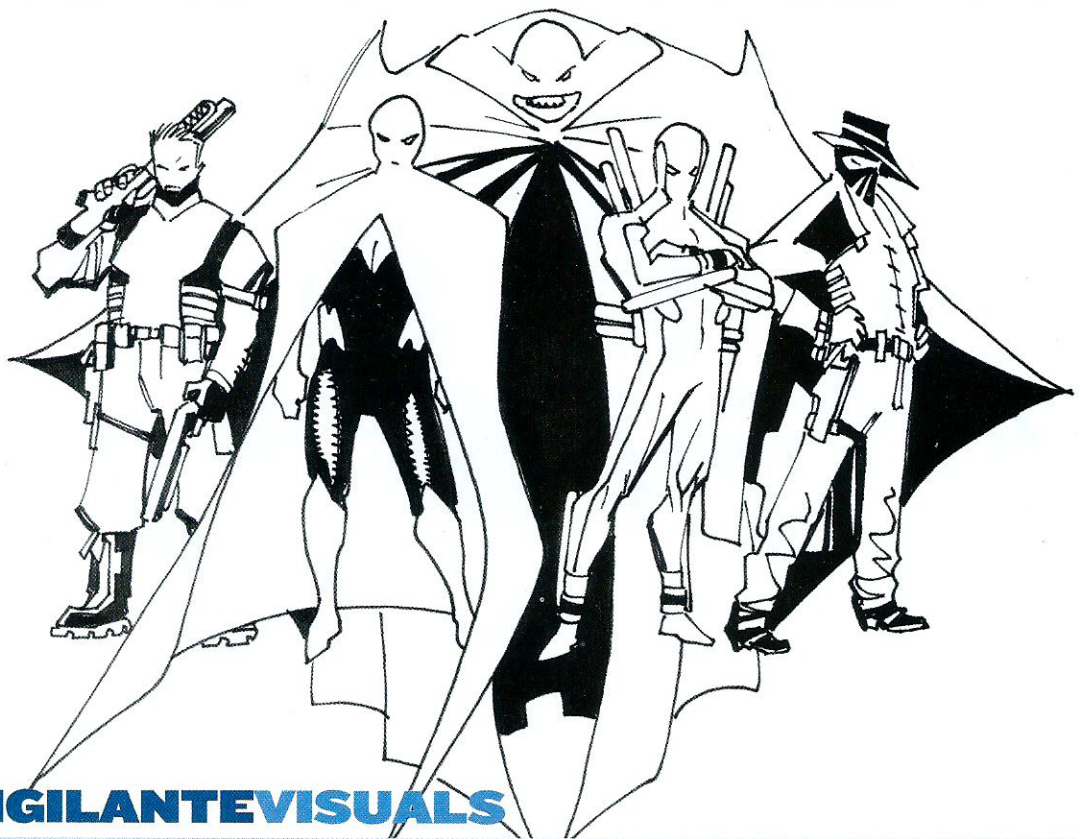


My name is Scott McDaniel. I'm not a dark, driven vigilante, but I live vicariously like one every day as a comic book artist! My 10 years of experience drawing the adventures of Batman, Nightwing, Robin and Daredevil have given me an exhaustive, absolutely authoritative knowledge of the costumed vigilante superhero. In order to make the world a safer place, and to better equip you to design and draw these types of characters, I will pass on all I've learned to *you*.

BATTOBASICS

When we say, "costumed vigilante hero," we're talking about the type of character of whom Batman is the archetype. The vigilante hero's mission? The self-appointed authority to capture, judge and/or punish criminals. Discover the particular mission of your vigilante hero and the type of criminals he will likely face, and you will begin to get a handle on how he should look, behave, move and fight.

Generally, costumed vigilante characters can share similar qualities. They take tactical advantage of the night (that's when most monsters come out) and of their operating environment (from city to jungle). They possess some form of combat skill or training, whether police, military or some form of martial arts. Because of combat requirements, they usually vary in size from a boxing heavyweight to an Olympic gymnast. They are usually experts in the use of various weapons, either lethal or non-lethal. They are most often serious-minded, if not single-minded, in their mission. But these similarities are just guides, not limitations. Within this set of similarities, a great variety can emerge.



VIGILANTEVISUALS

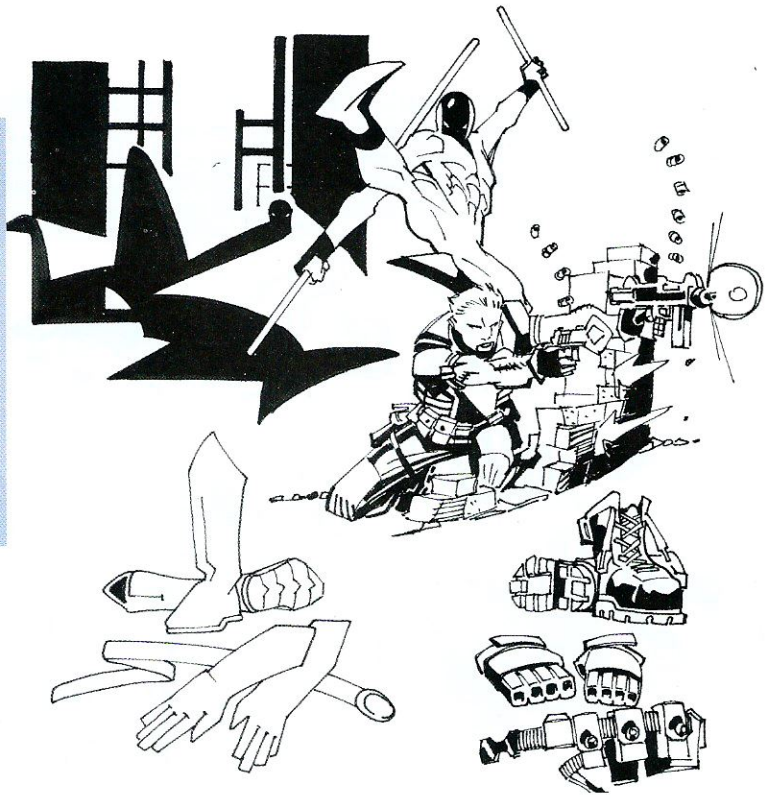
There is no rule that says, "All vigilante heroes look like *this*." A vigilante hero can take any form: massively muscled or sleekly built, with or without a cape, with or without weapons, with or without a mask, with or without a costume. There is no rule for this archetype.

What matters are his *motivations* and his *targets*. Let his form follow his *function*. You control the creative muses and do purposeful visual design work by making reasoned choices, then evaluating those choices. Ask yourself a few questions about your character's motivations and his targets, and your answers will lead you to an appropriate costume.

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EXTERNAL MOTIVATIONS

Does he veil himself from the population? Does he make himself a deterrent by being publicly seen? Is his costume symbolic or functional? Does he wear a cape to conceal and change his contour, or does he rely on acrobatics or a fighting style that prohibits a cape? Does he stick out in a crowd, or can he blend in and disappear among the masses? Is his costume meant to scare the pants off his adversaries, or is it meant to be efficiently utilitarian? Does your character employ modern, lethal weapons, or ancient, non-lethal, martial-arts weapons? Is your vigilante a man or a woman? Is he old or young?



INTERNAL MOTIVATIONS

Is your vigilante hero out to capture, judge or punish criminals? Does being a vigilante offer your character some sinister satisfaction, or is it a source of pain and moral/ethical turmoil? Is his attitude emotionally charged (obsessed, passionate, sullen and/or threatening) or emotionally neutral (clinical, business-like, precise)? Does your character employ physically savage and brutal tactics, or does he act with precise and non-lethal methods? Answering all these questions helps flesh out your costumed vigilante.

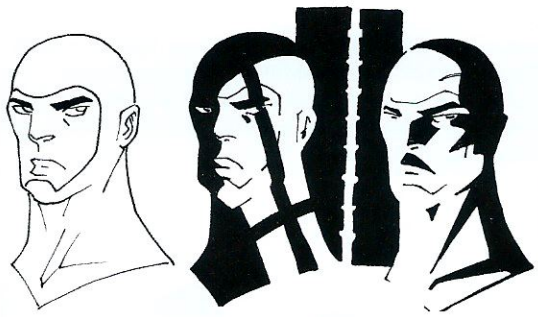


TARGETS

Will he face street criminals, criminal masterminds, criminal kingpins, international criminals or super-villains? Are his adversaries armed with knives, guns, rocket launchers, laser guns or superpowers? The choice of villains helps determine your choice of hero.

By now, your character is pretty solid. You know how he sees the world, you know his mission, you know his adversaries, and you know what he looks like and how he fights. Now bring him to life on the page.





LIGHTING

Almost by definition, these guys operate at night. Take advantage of the tremendous variety of light and shadow available in the environments (streetlights, spotlights, moonlight, fires, etc). Use light and shadow to create intensity, fear and mystery.

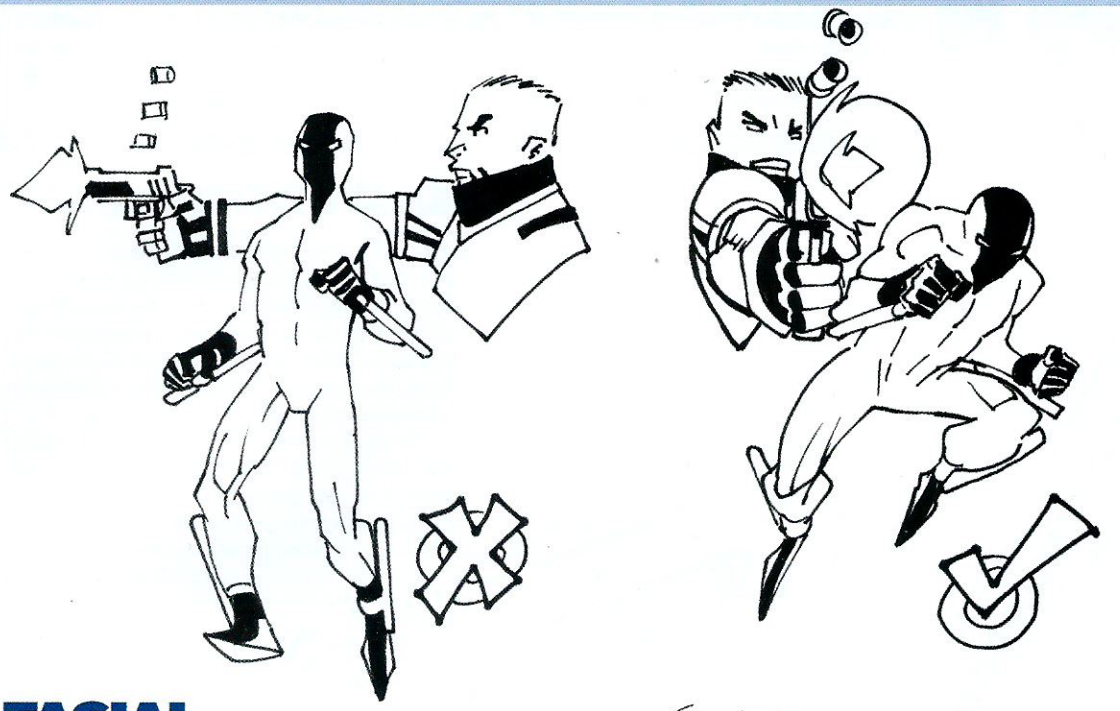


COMPOSITION

These vigilante guys are in charge. Take advantage of shot composition to make this point. A high position is *dominant* (see the check-marked illustration); you should avoid a low position, which is interpreted as *submissive.*

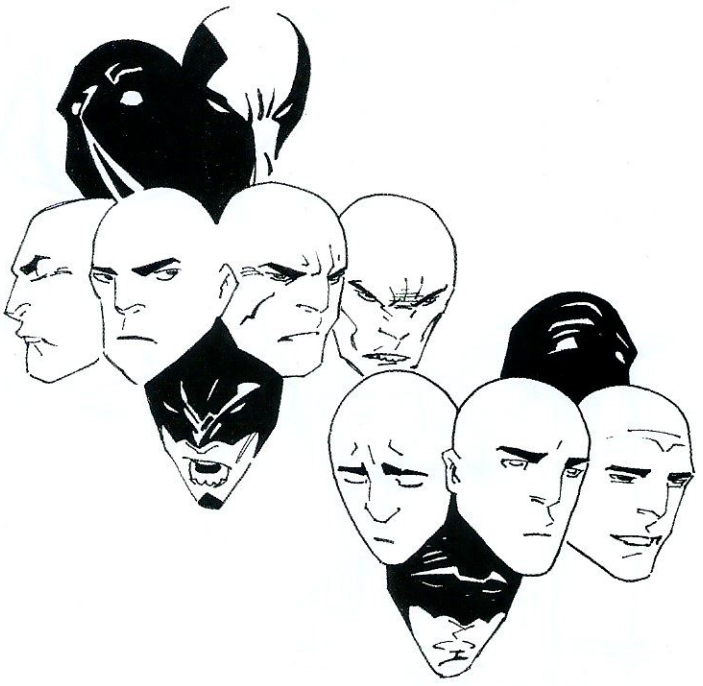
BODYTALK

These guys are warriors constantly ready for battle. They must look balanced and ready to explode into action at any moment. Their actions should be exaggerated and balanced and fluid. Use actions that take advantage of the third dimension, popping out of the paper and toward the reader (i.e., the check-marked illustration).



FACIAL MANIPULATION

A vigilante is a person who can feel the full range of emotions and thus present the full range of facial expressions, and you must be capable of rendering them all. Even masked characters must emote, so feel free to take artistic license when needed to melodramatically manipulate the eye and mouth areas of the mask to convey the desired emotion. As you may have guessed, some expressions will be far more common than others.





I HOPE THIS LESSON has better equipped you to design and draw cool, costumed vigilante heroes. When properly applied, these techniques can make almost any character cool!

Titles such as DC's Nightwing *and Marvel's* Daredevil *spotlight Scott McDaniel's talented use of shadowy vigilantes.*

BRUTES

BY GENE HA

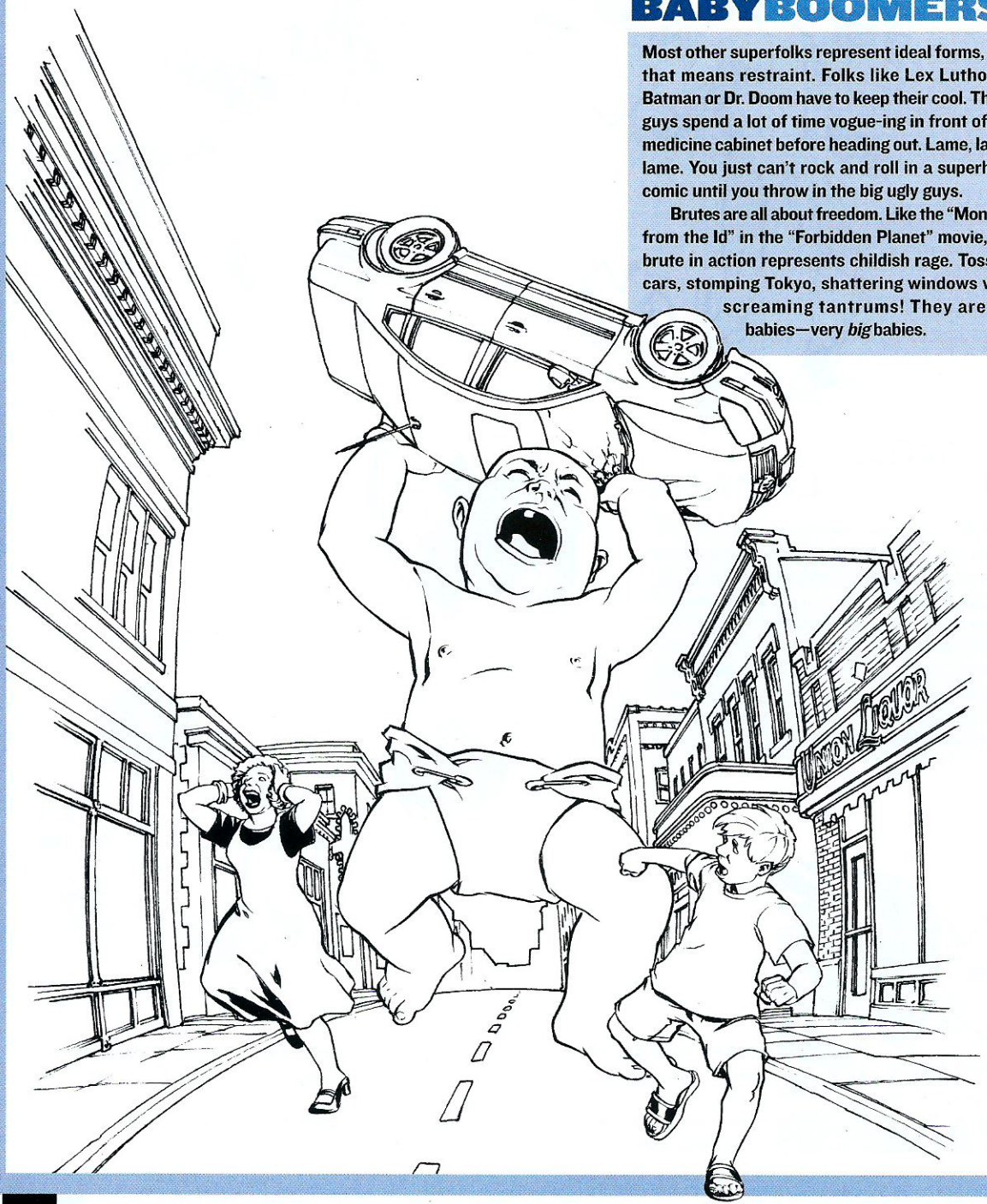


No superhero is more fun to draw than the big brute. They don't have to look idealized like Captain America or Wonder Woman. Brutes allow you to express your inner quirks. Are you a fan of Japanese live-action monsters? Female bodybuilders? Do you collect old toasters? All of these have formed the basis of classic superhero brutes. Don't get all wobbly on us and settle for another oddly colored linebacker on steroids. Mr. Banner continues to fill that niche nicely, thank you.

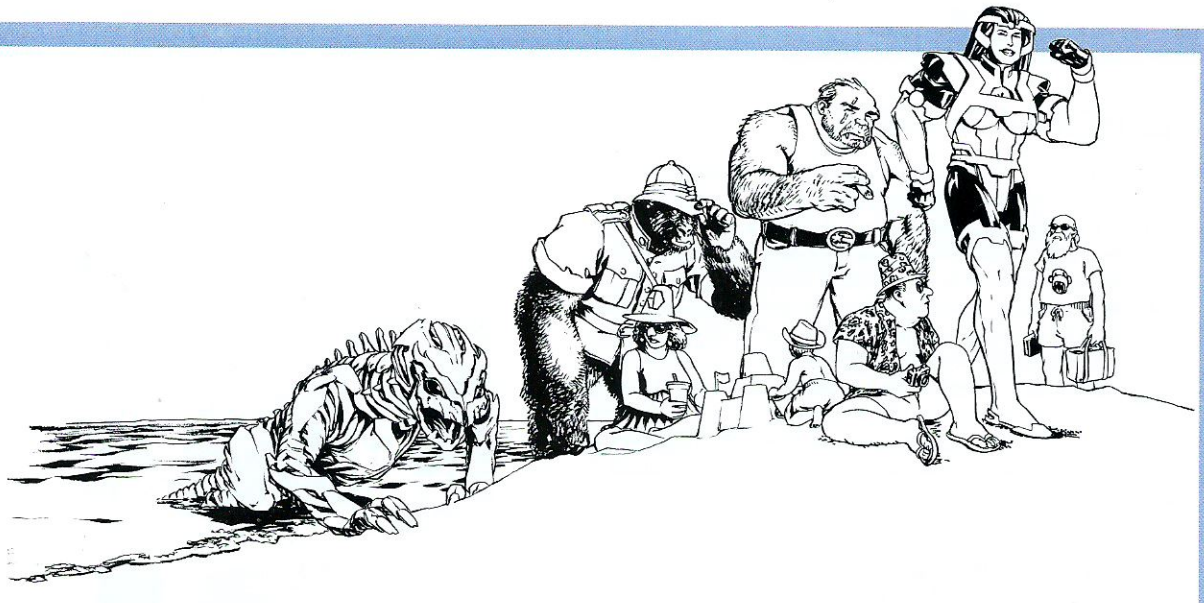
BABYBOOMERS

Most other superfolks represent ideal forms, and that means restraint. Folks like Lex Luthor or Batman or Dr. Doom have to keep their cool. Those guys spend a lot of time vogue-ing in front of the medicine cabinet before heading out. Lame, lame, lame. You just can't rock and roll in a superhero comic until you throw in the big ugly guys.

Brutes are all about freedom. Like the "Monster from the Id" in the "Forbidden Planet" movie, the brute in action represents childish rage. Tossing cars, stomping Tokyo, shattering windows with screaming tantrums! They are big babies—very *big* babies.



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BEAUTYINTHEBEAST?

The brute is the most varied of all the superhero archetypes. They range from big, Jack Kirby-style reptile monsters to talking gorillas to cigar-chomping grumps to sculpted bodybuilders (the "Governator" fits into all of these categories). It's hard to find inviolable rules for them. But even female brutes tend to have exaggerated secondary male characteristics: pronounced brows and jaws, broad shoulders, large arms and hands and powerful thick limbs. Play around with the concept of "masculine": hairy and rough, perhaps even flinty or scaled. Fists like ham hocks. Caveman brow lines and knuckle-dragging slouches. Beer guts and grease stains. They can make Stanley Kowalski (from "A Streetcar Named Desire") look effete.

We tend to think of brutes bursting with huge ripped muscles *a la* the Hulk, but some of them have no muscles at all. The Big Guy (of *The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot* fame) looks like a soup-can collection, and I defy anyone to show me Ben Grimm's *palmaris longus* since he got hit by them cosmic rays. Don't limit your imagination.

Part of the fun can come from mixing the brutish with the delicate. A brute doesn't have to prove his manliness. What fun would the Beast be if he didn't read Shakespeare? And Big Barda is much man and much woman.



FASHIONSHOW

Costumes for the modern superbrute swing from slick science-hero tights to street clothes. You have to ask yourself what you want to emphasize.

Usually you want to show off a lot of skin. Let your audience see those giant arms and toes like a row of bricks. If you've played with textures (like fur or stone) this is doubly important. Shirts and shoes are not required. Capes are positively rare. Some brutes don't wear any clothes at all. What costume there is should accentuate the shoulders and fists. Minimize the hips: The Thing's shorts make the rest of him look bigger.

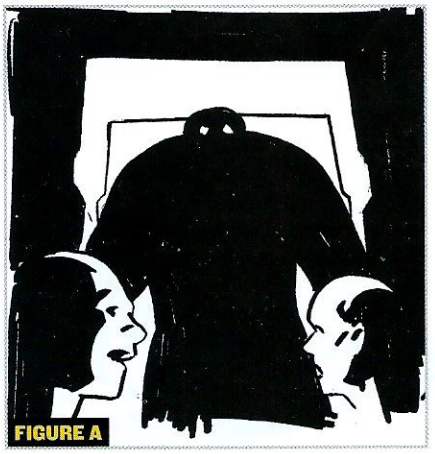
Because of their poor impulse control, it can be fun to dress brutes as overgrown kids. They can do what they want. You know the joke: What do you call a 500-pound gorilla wearing a diaper? "Sir."

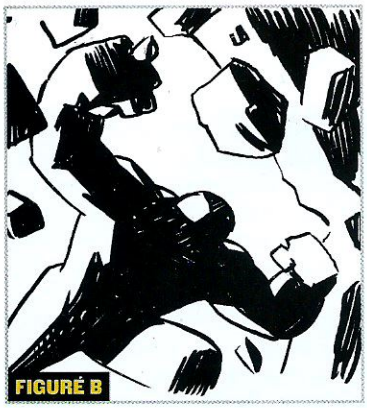
BIGPICTURE

All the normal rules of comics storytelling apply to your basic brute, but they have a special requirement: You need to make them look big. The easiest trick is to use a worm's-eye perspective, as if the viewer were especially tiny (**Figure A**).

Create a sense of scale. Put them next to smaller objects and characters, like a Hummer H2 or broken rubble (**Figure B**). Let them loom over other characters (**Figure C**). They should stick up a little higher in the panel than everyone else. This can be tricky if they're in the background or in a hole, but careful use of camera angles can pull it off.

Remember, if you stick your brute in the midst of large scenery, he'll look small (**Figure D**). But if he's supposed to feel small, then go ahead!


FIGURE A


FIGURE B

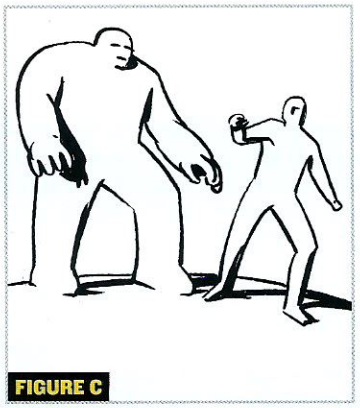
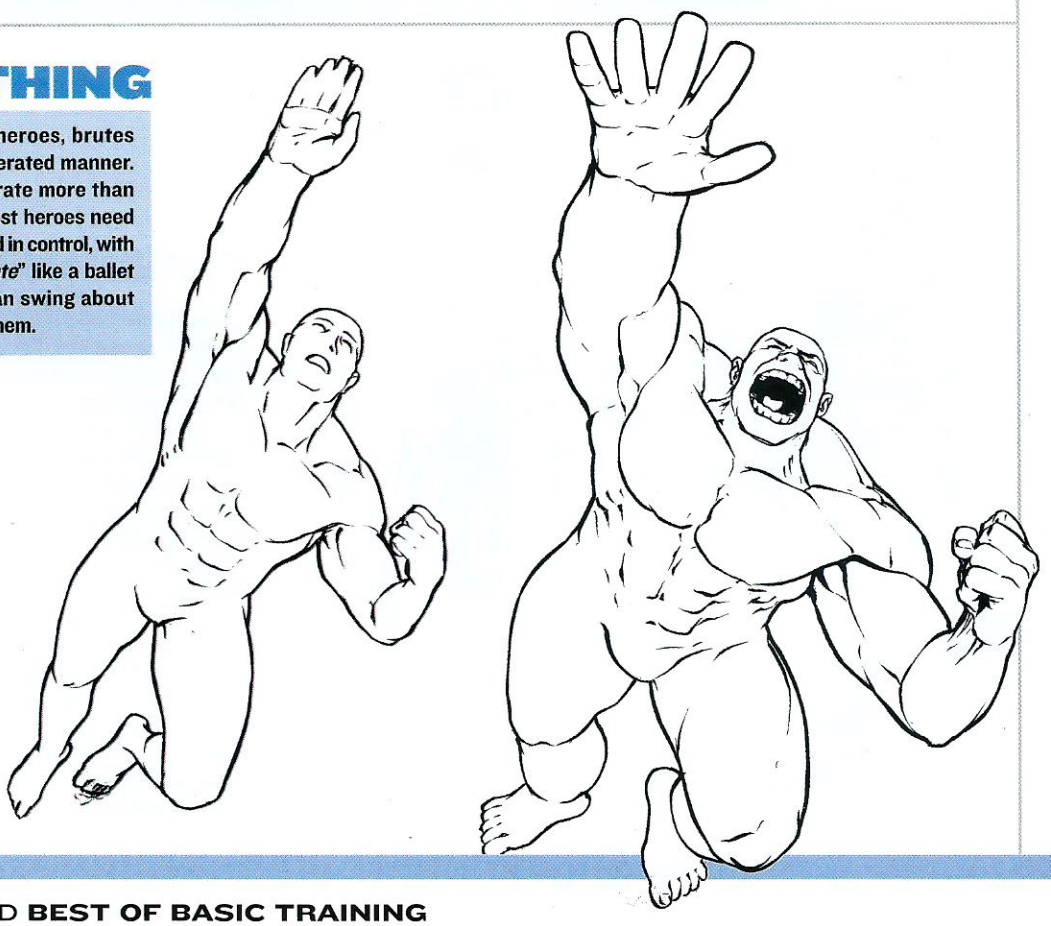
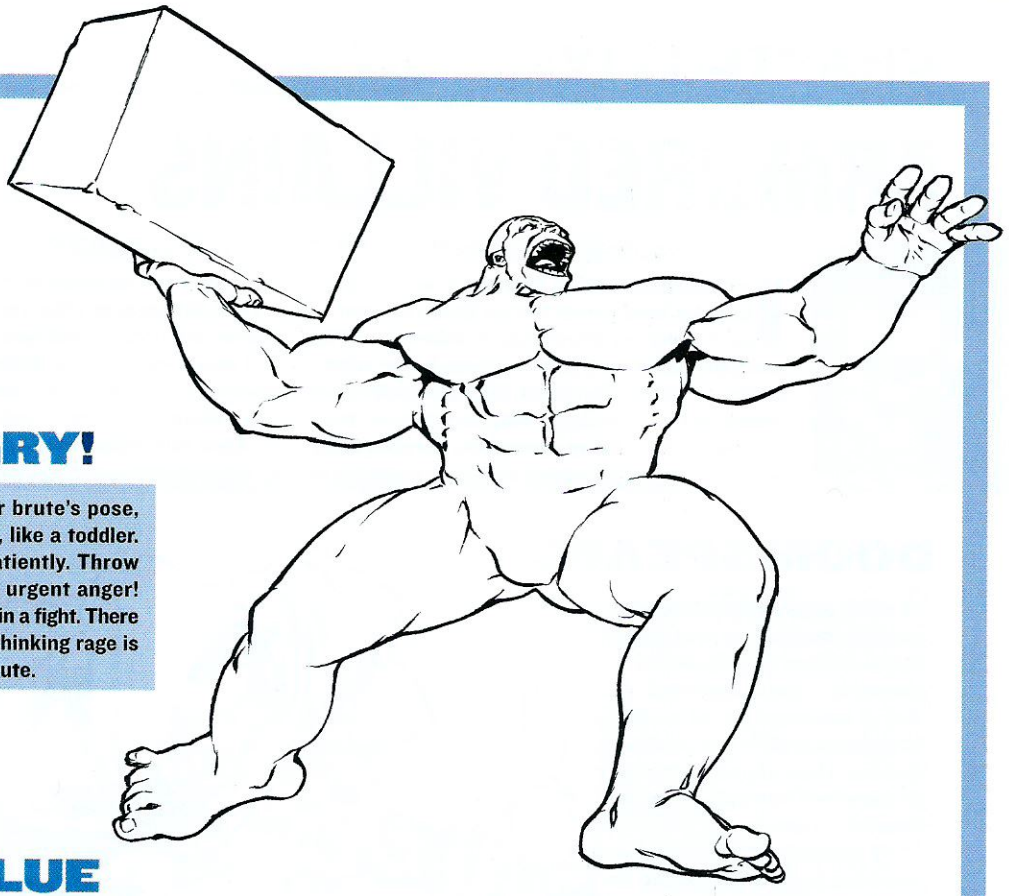

FIGURE C


FIGURE D

WILDTHING

Like other superheroes, brutes move in an exaggerated manner. They just exaggerate more than everyone else. Most heroes need to look graceful and in control, with their feet "*en pointe*" like a ballet dancer. Brutes can swing about more wildly than them.



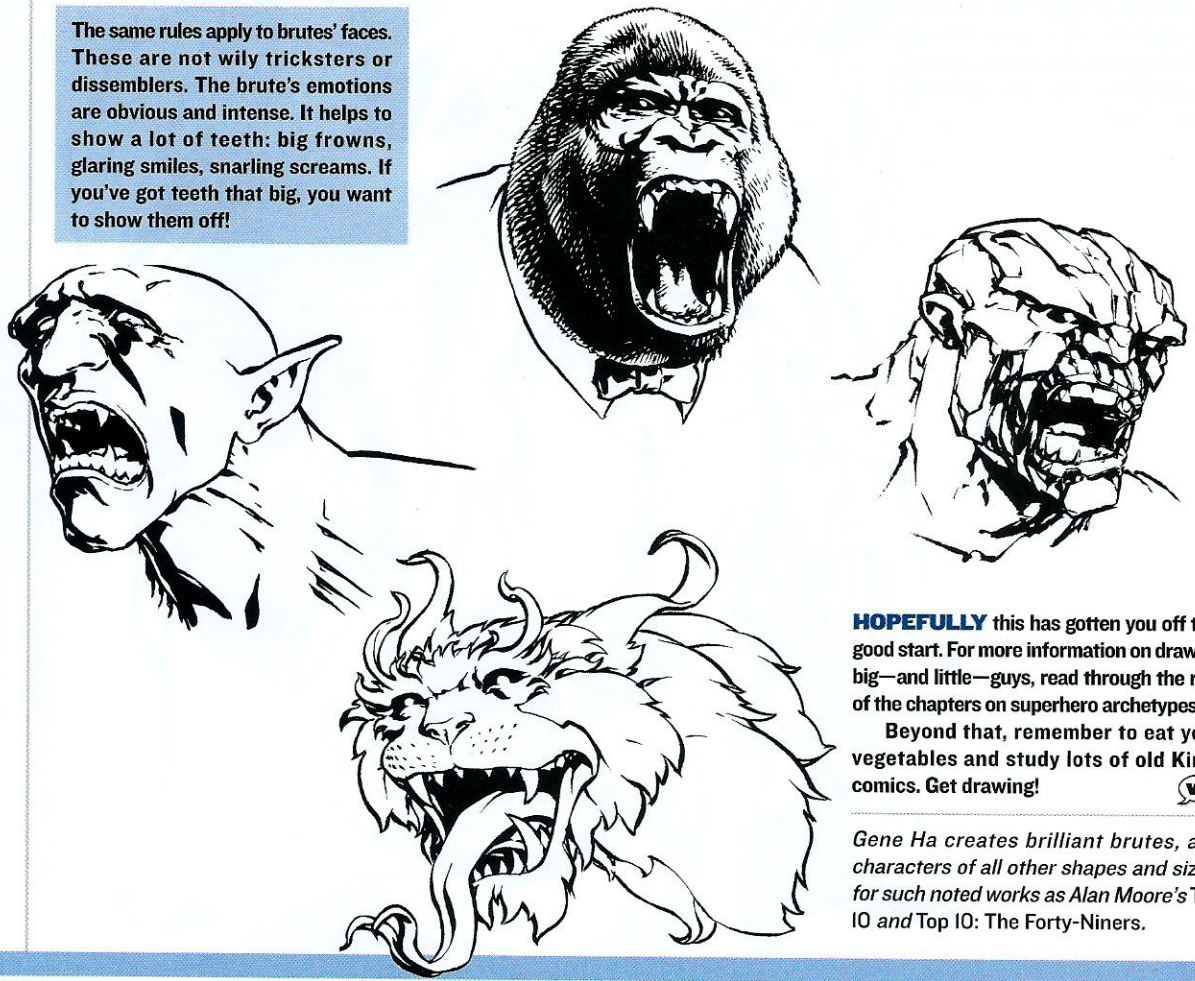


GETANGRY!

When you lay out your brute's pose, place the feet clumsily, like a toddler. Splay the fingers impatiently. Throw them off balance with urgent anger! Brutes lose all restraint in a fight. There are exceptions, but unthinking rage is what distinguishes a brute.

FACEVALUE

The same rules apply to brutes' faces. These are not wily tricksters or dissemblers. The brute's emotions are obvious and intense. It helps to show a lot of teeth: big frowns, glaring smiles, snarling screams. If you've got teeth that big, you want to show them off!



HOPEFULLY this has gotten you off to a good start. For more information on drawing big—and little—guys, read through the rest of the chapters on superhero archetypes.

Beyond that, remember to eat your vegetables and study lots of old Kirby comics. Get drawing!

Gene Ha creates brilliant brutes, and characters of all other shapes and sizes, for such noted works as Alan Moore's Top 10 *and* Top 10: The Forty-Niners.

ARMORED VILLAINS BY ETHAN VAN SCIVER



I've been instructed by dark and powerful secret factions deep within Wizard Entertainment to pass along any knowledge or information I've gathered that may help you, the reader, in your efforts to draw armored characters. We'll concentrate on villains, but it can easily be adapted to heroes, too.

I myself have drawn somewhere between many and absolutely no armored characters in my short career, but because I fear for the safety of family, friends and myself, I will fake it and hope it edifies and enlightens one of us. Better yet, allow me to use someone who knows all there is to know about armored supervillains as a stand-in and a mouthpiece.

Meet your Doom. Doctor Doom.

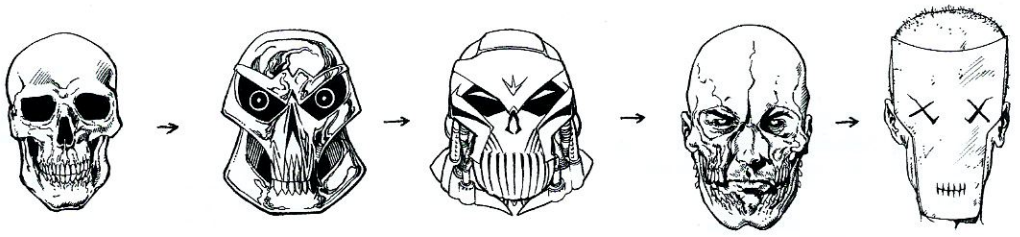
DOOMSPEAKS

"T'would appear that you've been cored by Iron Man, my good fellow. Those repulsor rays are unkind to ambitious young career criminals that go about unprotected by a suit of molecularly aligned, crystallized iron over a base of titanium nitride. Or bony exoskeletons. It may be time for a redesign.

"Fortunately, pencils and pigma markers have been placed in the hands of some very talented up-and-coming artists. Among them is a splendid young scribbler named Ethan Van Sciver. Shall we have a look?"



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THEHEADPIECE

"Another man once said, 'Criminals are a cowardly and superstitious lot.' Heroes are worse. In choosing a headpiece design, start with an elemental symbol of fear or evil. A wolf? A snake? Richard Nixon? The pagan images of a tattoo parlor will present many intriguing options.

"Here are the very frightening bones that are located in the human head: a skull. By simplifying, caricaturing and rethinking the shape and the lines, one can invent countless unique and yet familiar designs to terrify simpletons such as Captain America. It's plainly obvious that Doom's own mask was loosely designed with a skull in mind. Doom terrifies. So can you."





ARMORED TEXTURE

"Textures are very important when rendering your armored villain. What horror are you unleashing upon this tiny, pissant little world? Is he a galactic would-be conqueror or a monstrous crustacean man from the Bermuda Triangle?

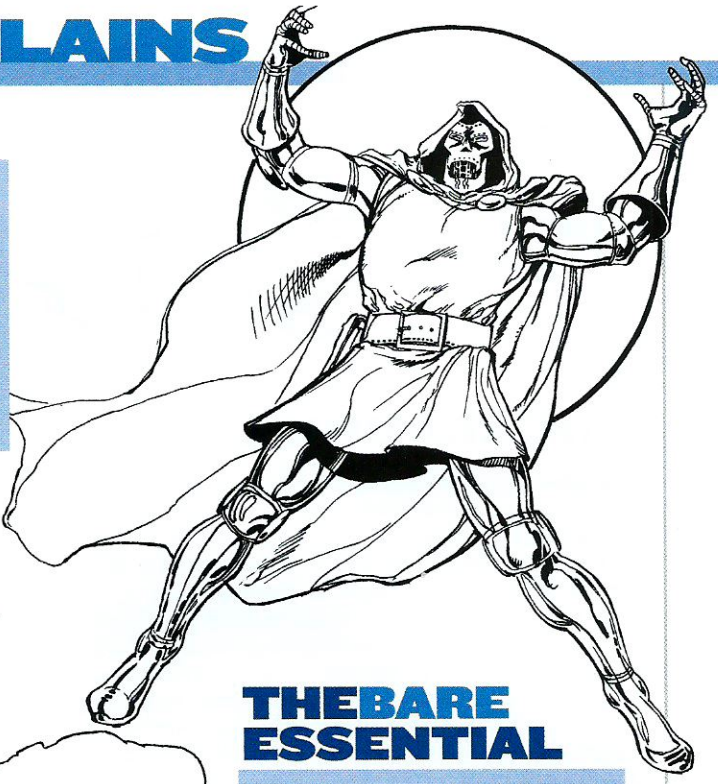
"These questions must be answered before you can proceed. Whatever is decided, you must learn how to use light, shadow and detail to give your drawing texture and dimension. The arm at the top is highly reflective chrome. This offers a pleasant diversion, because chrome allows the opportunity for an industrious and daring artist to draw clear, mirrored reflections. Besides potential storytelling benefits, reflections are fun to draw and look at. Do them justice!

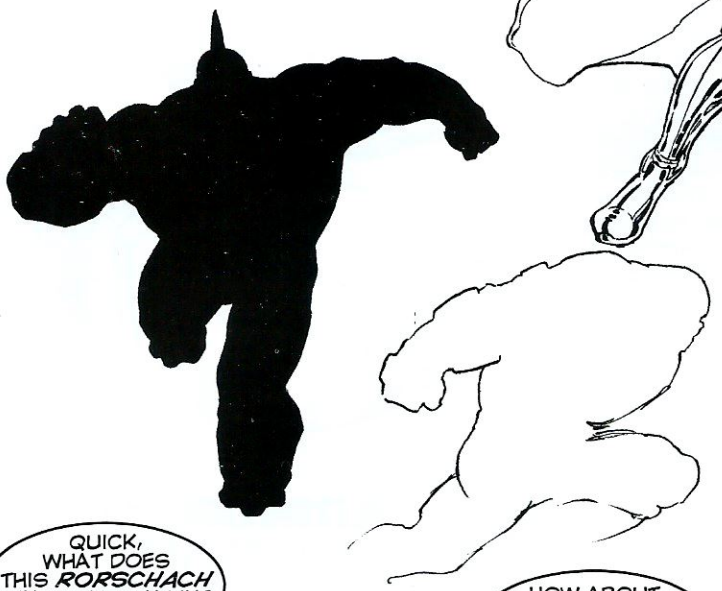
"The second arm is brushed steel, kind of a matte-finish. It looks sturdy and artificial. Limit the rendering for this effect.

"And the last arm is rock or bone. You cannot ever finish rendering the tiny imperfections and cracks when detailing this texture. You can only abandon it. Have fun. Be random."

UNIQUE VISION

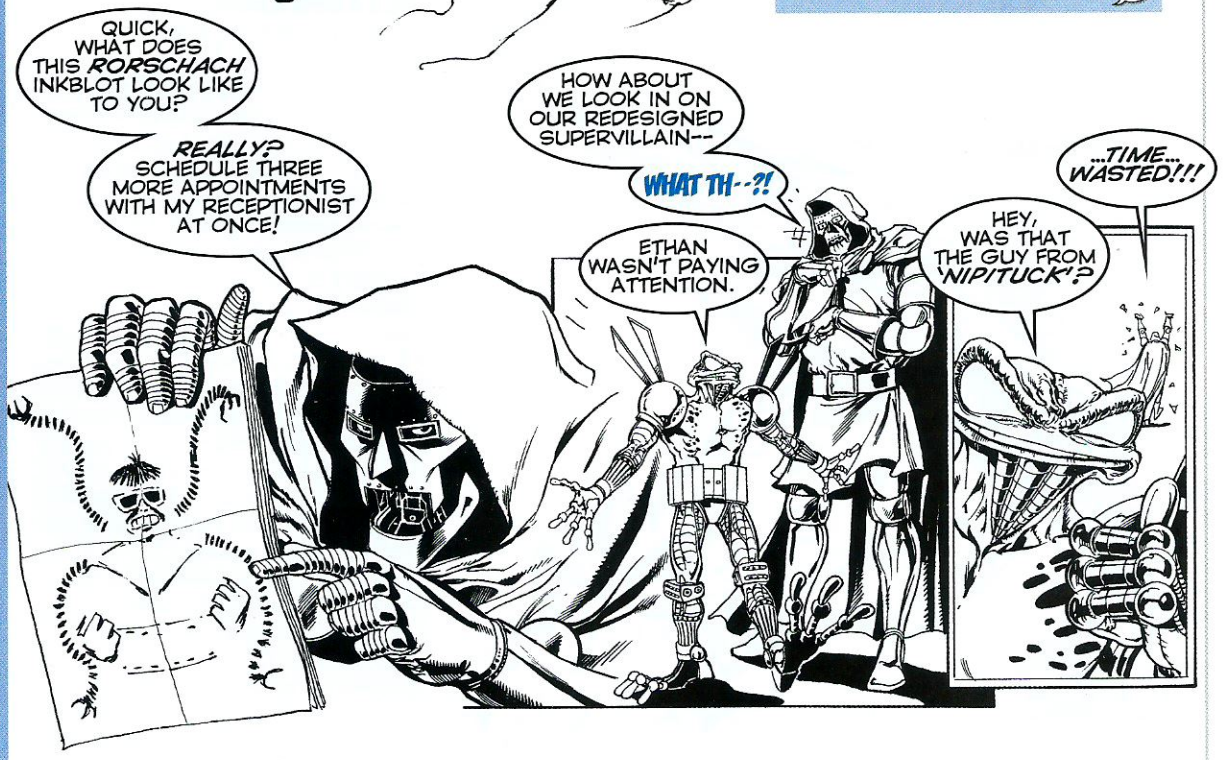
"Whatever you come up with should be uniquely yours. Try to avoid using other armored supervillain designs for reference; rather, go straight to primary sources. Your imagination, your nightmares, the crazy ideas you have at 4 a.m.—nothing is out of bounds, nothing is too outrageous, and everything is worth a quick experimental sketch. How many sketches do you guess Doom did before he came up with his finalized Doombot design? None! He delegated to punks like you! So what else have you got?!"





THE BARE ESSENTIAL

"Finally, the best designed villains are the ones that can be stripped down to bare essentials and still be recognizable. A silhouette. A few lines. When you can immediately identify a character from his outline, you know you have something. Would you not guess Doom from his fearsome shadow?" (W)



Ethan Van Sciver's artwork shines like armored warriors in such titles as Harris' Cyberfrog, *Marvel's* New X-Men *and DC's* Green Lantern *and* Superman/Batman.

SIDEKICKS

BY TODD NAUCK



Holy child endangerment laws! When Robin first premiered in *Detective Comics*#38 (April 1940), sales shot through the roof. The sidekick brought a lighter side to the dark, edgier hero. It was a tension that played off like yin and yang.

I've spent a majority of my comics career drawing teenage superheroes, most notably in my run on DC Comics' *Young Justice*. That comic featured a team full of sidekicks!

So what does it take to be a sidekick? I'm here to walk you through some of the basics of the sidekick archetype: body type, poses, facial expressions and costuming. Quickly, chums! To the drawing table!

BODYTYPE

When I approach the design of a stereotypical sidekick, I think lean, but there's some muscle, too. Gotta pack *some* power when fighting guys three times your size!

As for height, most sidekicks run from 5'1" to 5'7", generally. There's a hope and enthusiasm conveyed in their posture. Chest out, shoulders back and a wide stance can portray a youthful confidence, such as with our rough sketch of our new character (left) and the finished piece (right).



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SIDEKICKS

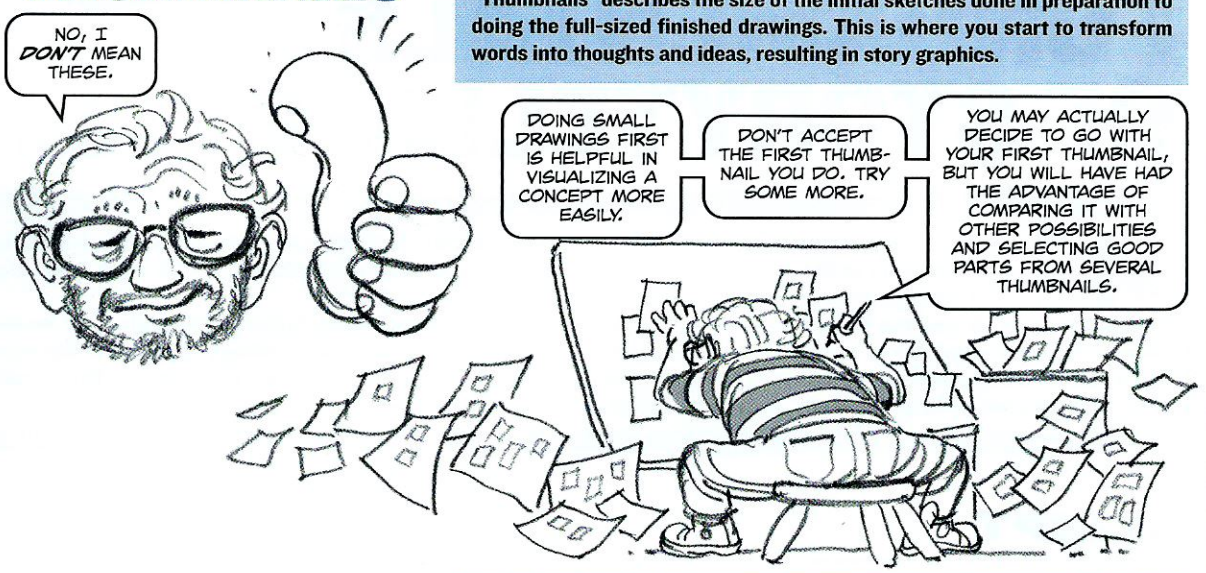


DOUBLE TROUBLE

As we look at the sidekick next to the hero, there's a noticeable difference in height, muscle mass and stance. Drawing a teen has a darker, more intricate costume, the sidekick is approached with more simplicity. Let's take a look at this pairing I call

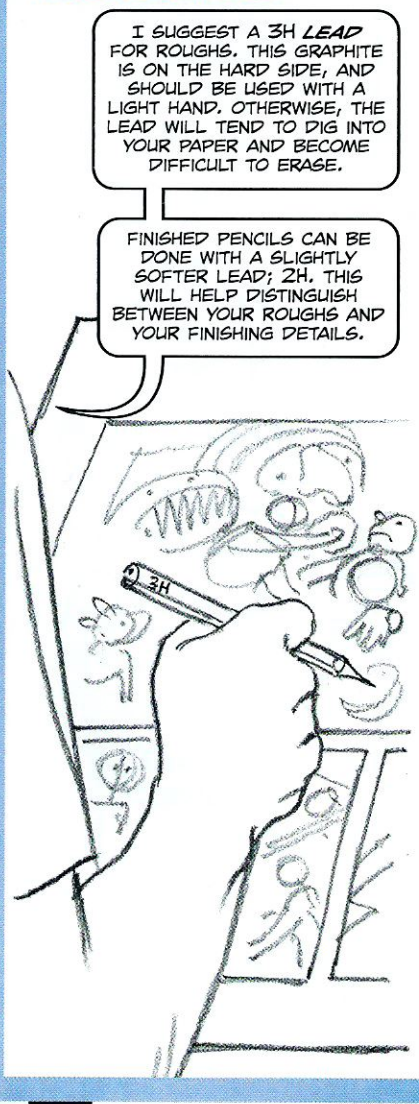
THUMBNAILS

"Thumbnails" describes the size of the initial sketches done in preparation to doing the full-sized finished drawings. This is where you start to transform words into thoughts and ideas, resulting in story graphics.



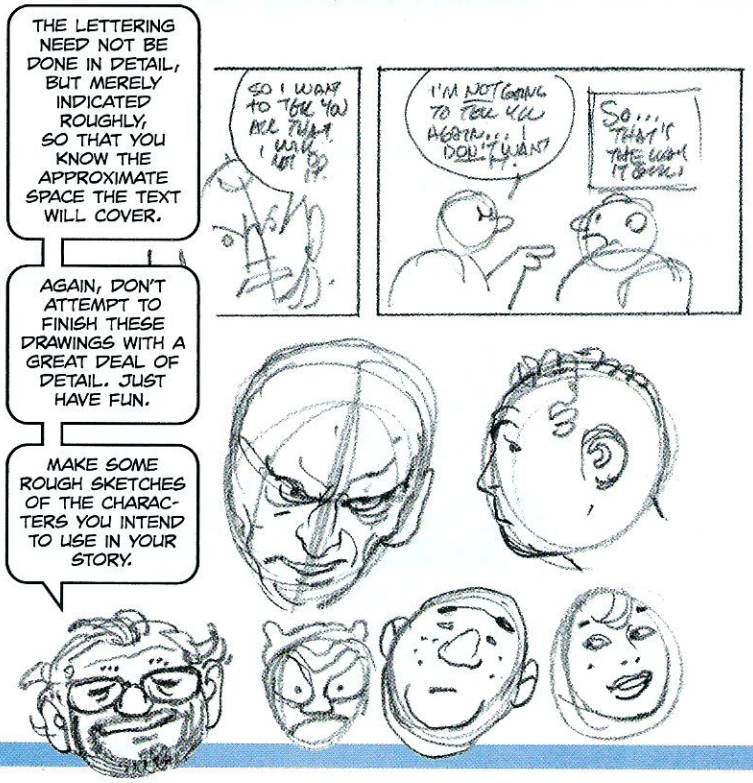
ROUGHS

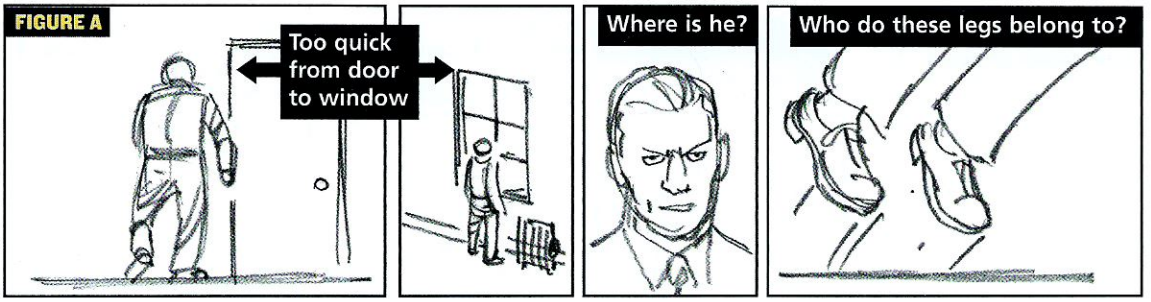
Start by doing your first drawings roughly. Leave out details. I know you're anxious to do some real finished drawing, but it's too soon. You don't want to put a lot of effort into early drawings that you may want to change or even eliminate. So do your initial sketches roughly, but with enough clarity to recognize what you meant when you finish them later on.



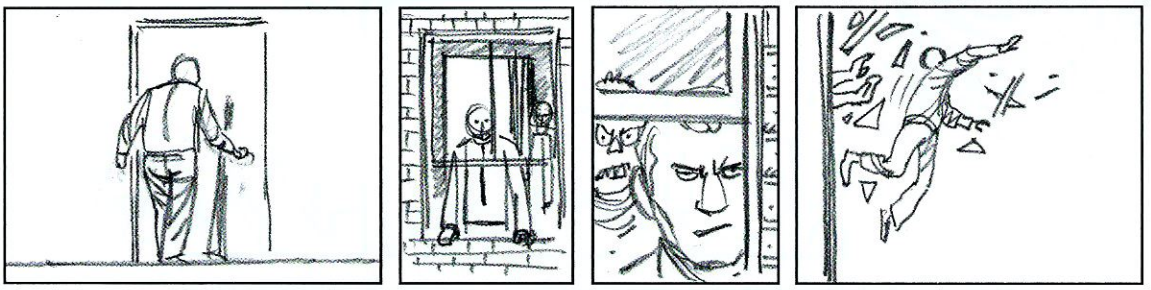
INCLUDE BALLOONS

Text is an integral part of designing a comic book page. Balloons and captions ***must*** be incorporated in the initial layouts, not as an afterthought. It makes ***little sense*** to plan a panel composition and then ***cover*** half of the illustration with a word balloon or sound effect.



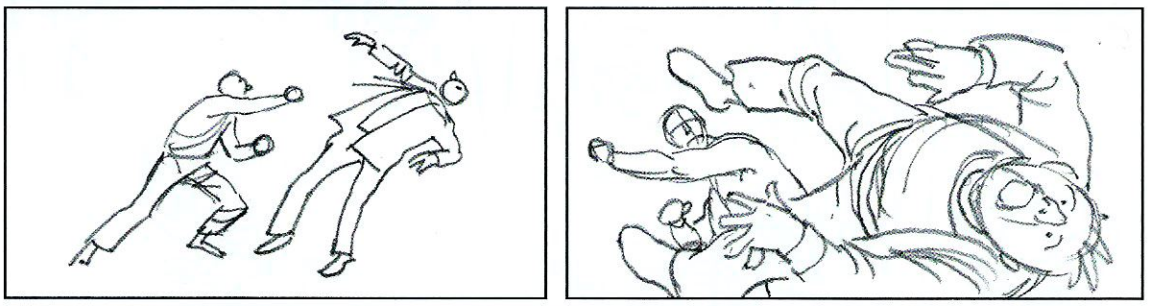


A comic book page must have a smooth transition from panel to panel. As cartoonists, we attempt to give the impression of movement despite the fact that we draw "still" pictures. To achieve the impression of movement, we must plan our panels with enough graphic information for the reader to connect the in-between panels in their mind's eye. Anything that disrupts the flow (like too great a jump between panels, or not enough graphic information) disrupts the story's flow for the reader (**Figure A**). A disruptive flow stops the movement.

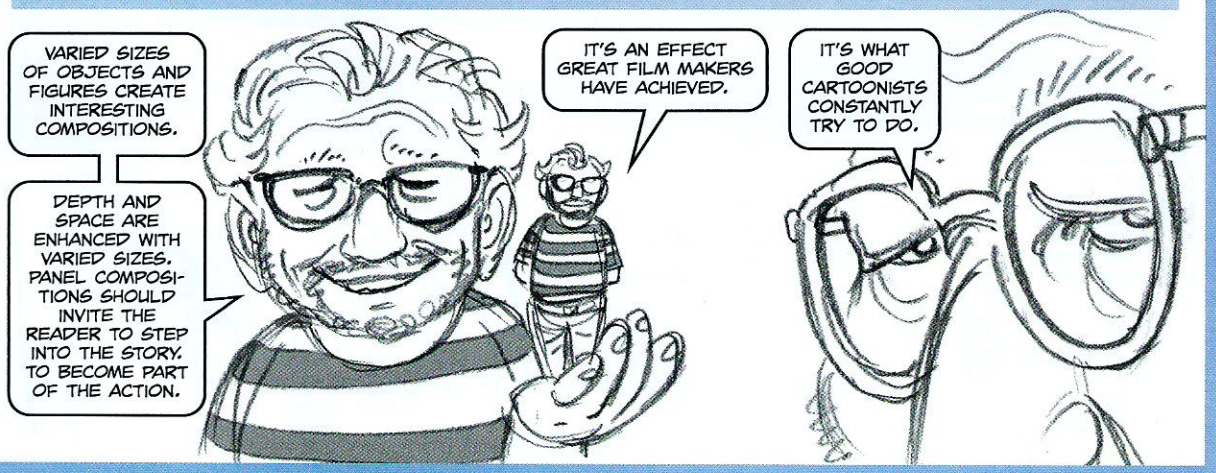


SIZEVARIATIONS

Variations of sizes of objects and figures are extremely important in creating movement.



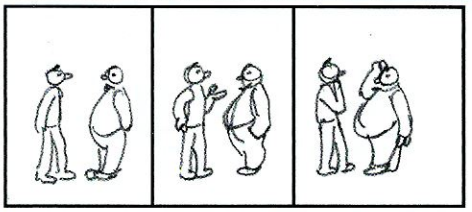
A series of panels containing figures of similar size will tend to stultify or deaden movement and action. It's like making a movie with a stationary camera. Little change in size means less movement and truncated action.



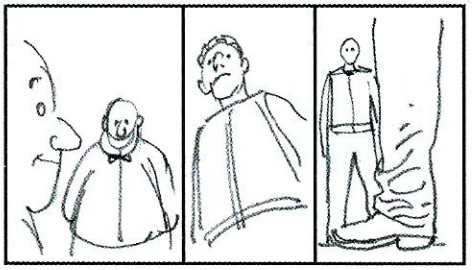
ANGLES

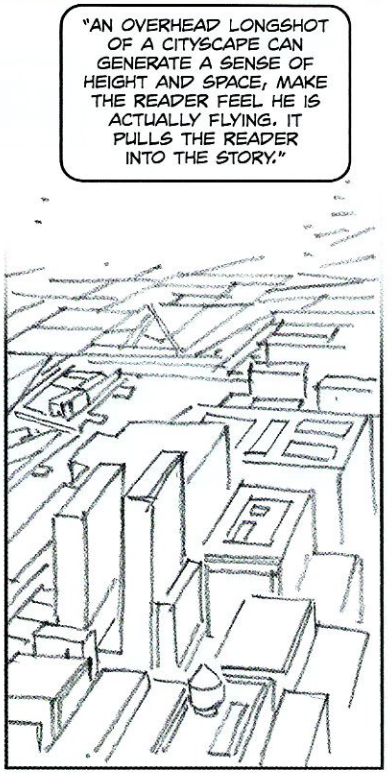


Straight-on drawings with little change of shapes or angles may be used at times, but will become boring if used too often.

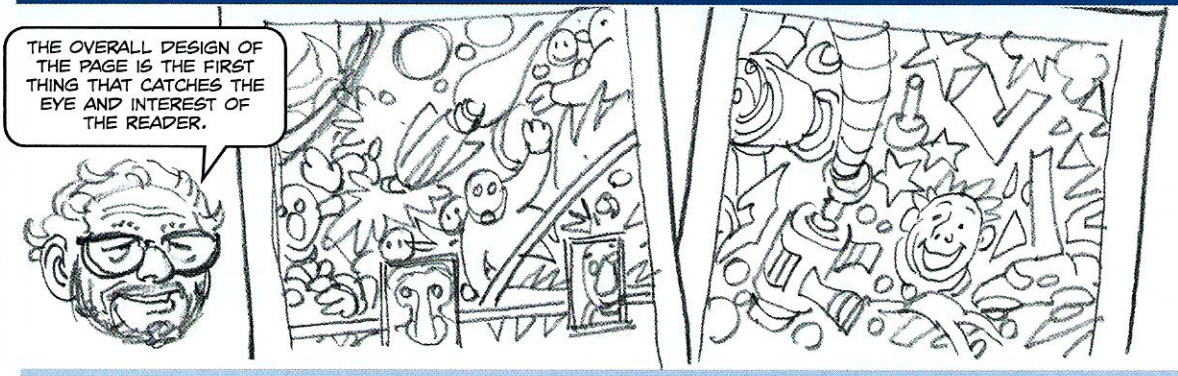


Acute angles and extreme perspectives arouse the readers' imagination, placing him into otherwise unattainable positions and places. Especially when the drawing is done effectively.



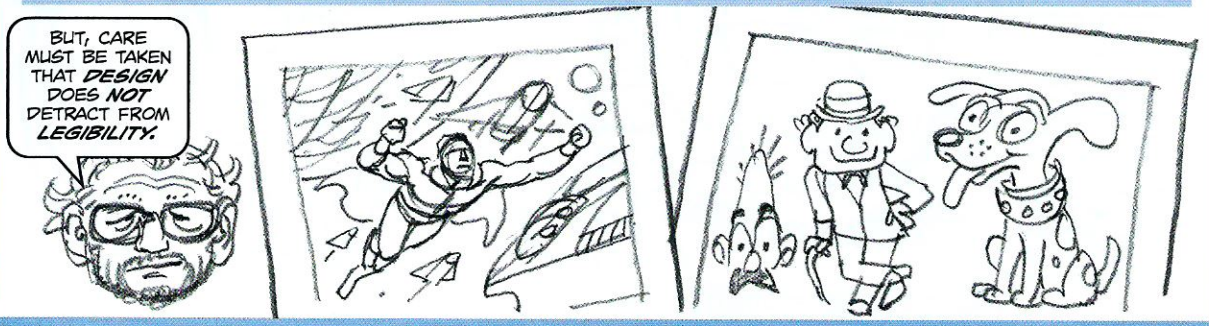


PAGE DESIGN



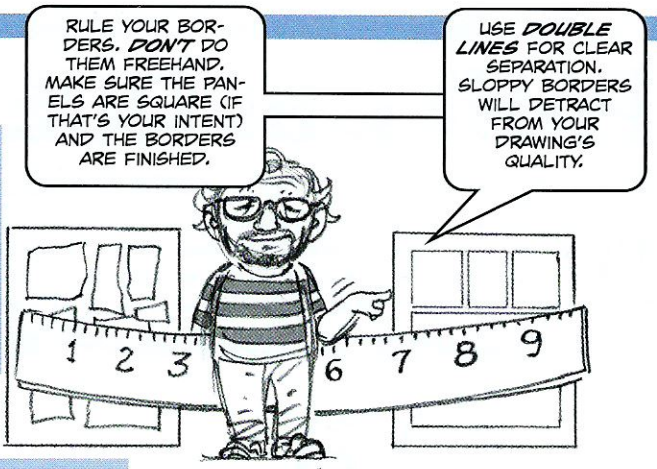
If the design aspect makes it difficult for the reader to focus on the story intent, the artist has failed in his effort to communicate, and ***communication*** is the ***name*** of the ***game***.

All styles are subject to the aforementioned points. Acceptability of style is based on ***quality***. The simplest cartoon style can qualify as a good form with which to tell a story. Good ***simple*** drawings are often more ***difficult*** to achieve than the more complex realistic illustrations. Yes, often ***less*** is ***more***.



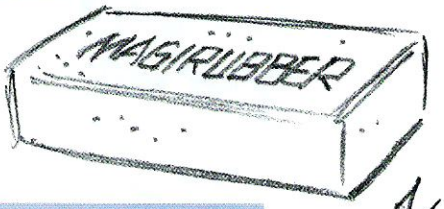
USEARULER

Very often, the aspiring cartoonist will rush work in anticipation of seeing the finished drawing. You do ***yourself*** a ***disservice*** if you don't take time with your thumbnails, roughs, sketching and character development. If you rush it, your work may become sloppy or lack proper finish and details. It's a bad habit to fall into and can be costly in terms of personal gratification and ability to get jobs.



AGOODERASER

A clean page signifies that the artist cares about his work. Smears and stains give the impression that he doesn't. If you don't press too hard with your pencil, your eraser will do a good job of cleaning.



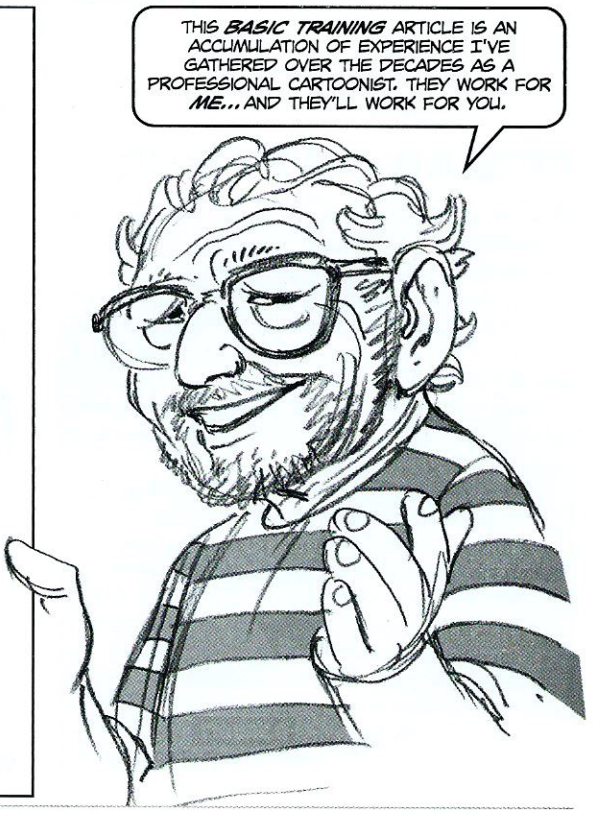
BLUEPENCIL?

Years ago, non-reproducing blue pencils were used by many pros as a time-saving device. Since the blue lines did not photograph in the engraving process, it was unnecessary to erase the pencils (if only blue was used). Not having to erase after inking saved time, especially if the artist had 20 or 30 pages to erase.

Today, some artists use the blue pencil to do their preliminary rough layouts. They will then finish with black graphite. There are positives and negatives in this procedure. After inking, your drawings need to be erased. The ink tends to slide off the blue lines when the pencils are erased. Also, the originals don't look as sharp or as clean with the inclusion of the blue lines.







Comics legend Joe Kubert is the founder of the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art. For more information, head over to www.kubertsworld.com. Also, check out his series Sgt. Rock: The Prophecy *from DC.*

PANEL SEQUENCE

BY MIKE WIERINGO

When I was a kid, one of the things that attracted me to comic books—besides the incredible artwork and compelling, epic stories—was the way each artist had his own way of conveying the necessary information needed to tell the story. Get it? Story-telling. An artist's storytelling style can be as unique as a fingerprint. An artist's choice of how to present the story is one of comics' most important aspects. Let's talk about some things to keep in mind when telling your stories...



IT'SABOUTTIME...

One of the many storytelling tools a comic book artist has is the opportunity to pace a story any way he chooses. Stretching or compressing a moment or scene is something an artist can do for immediate impact, to manipulate the way a page flows for his reader. This is unique to the comic book. You don't need to rewind a tape or hit a reset button on a video game; all a reader has to do is flick his eyes back to the beginning of a scene to experience it all over again.

Here, I've taken a simple action: a fella has a ball fall on his head unexpectedly. It's a simple scene to execute, but how it's presented can make that simple scene a bit more complex. The panel where the ball actually hits this poor schnook is the crux of the scene. But adding a couple of "beats" (like "heartbeats") before and after panel three stretches out the moment, adding a bit of humor **(Figure A)**. A much more abbreviated version **(Figure B)** gets the same info across, it just takes less time to tell.

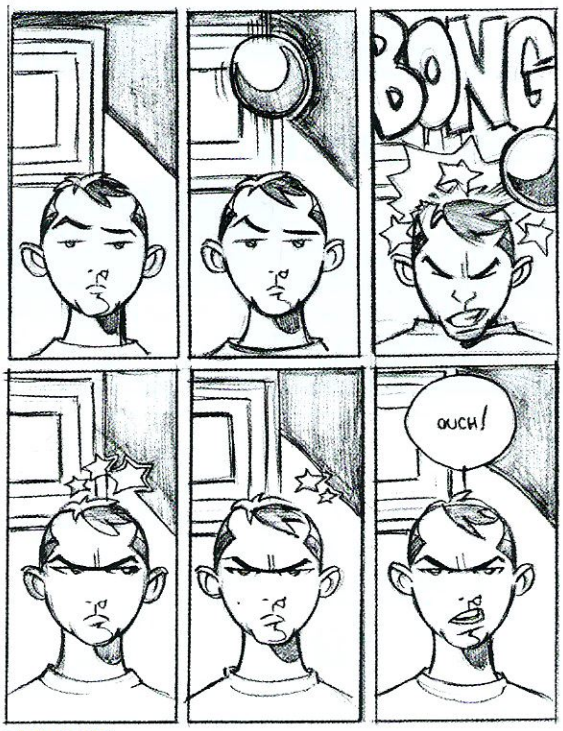
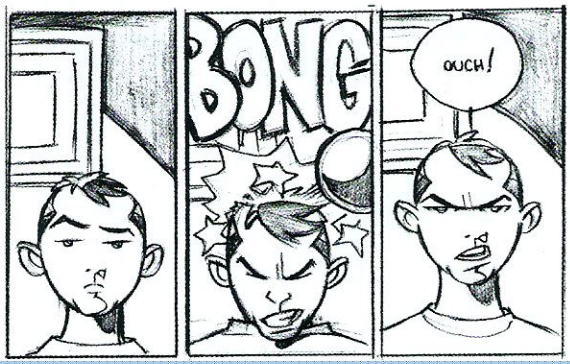


FIGURE A



PANEL LAYOUT

BY TERRY DODSON



Hello, Terry Dodson here, artist on such projects as *Wonder Woman*, *Spider-Man/Black Cat: The Evil that Men Do* and *Marvel Knights Spider-Man*. *Wizard*'s asked me to give you a lesson on panel and page layout, so I decided to go with a character everyone's familiar with—good ol' Spider-Man. Laying out the panels of a comic page is an art form, but as with all the topics in this book, with practice you'll get better and better.

So, here we go. These are some of the steps I take while laying out an actual comic page panel by panel, and the reasons behind the choices I ultimately have to make.

THESCRIPT

Here's Mark Millar's full script to *Marvel Knights Spider-Man* #1, page 5. Mark does a great job of showing everything that needs to be shown. Plus, all the dialogue is there, so you can leave plenty of space for word balloons and use the balloons as design elements in the panels.

Page Five

1
Cut back to the alley as the Goblin zips across the ground towards us here, squatting down like a quarterback on his glider and ready to take down the woozy, barely conscious Spider-Man he seems to be wiping the floor with. Spidey really looks an absolute mess by this point.

CAPTION — For a fraction of a second, I wonder what NORMAL people do on Sunday mornings.

GREEN GOBLIN — BIG, DEEP BREATH, PARKER...

2
Cut to outside the alley and we see the Goblin running into Spider-Man at seventy miles an hour and charging him back through the street as they both ride the Goblin Glider from the left to the right of the panel. Reaction from early-morning pedestrians and jolts from cars that suddenly stop to let them both zip past, struggling in this mid-air battle that's taking place just a couple of feet from the ground.

CAPTION — Are they blinking at their radio-alarms? Are they nuzzling into their wives? Are they having their ribs broken by some old friend of the family dressed-up in a rubber costume?

3
Impact shot as they both hit a passing car and Spider-Man is ridden into the windshield, smashing it into a thousand tiny pieces.

CAPTION — Or is that just ME?

4
Cut to car interior and the driver covers his face as a million little fragments of the windscreen shatter in towards him. Really go for realism here. All the little details are what matter. Make this as close to the real world and a real world environment as you possibly can. Colours should be muted throughout the whole issue. Likewise, people should be dressed and look as people dress and look in real life. Keep the bystanders young and trendy. Make everyone look like students.

NO DIALOGUE

TEMPLATES

Here's the page template I've used for the *Marvel Knights Spider-Man* series (**Figure A**). It's a widescreen, cinematic type of layout I first noticed being used by Rob Haynes on *Daredevil: Ninja* and see now in Bryan Hitch's *Ultimates 2*. Mark really wanted to tell a more mature, darker type of story, and I felt this style of layout would work perfectly.

When you want to do an establishing shot, I like to use **Figure B**, where the first panel bleeds off the page. I think this makes the reader immediately notice something different is up. **Figure C** is a variation where there are two small actions that don't require a full panel, or you have a big action or a hero shot, or a combination of both. After reading through the script, I see that it's clear that four panels of action will work for this page, and so I switch to a page template something like **Figure D**.

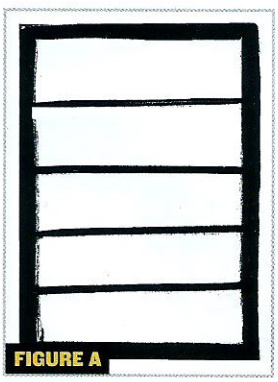


FIGURE A

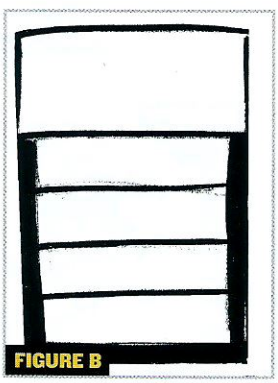


FIGURE B

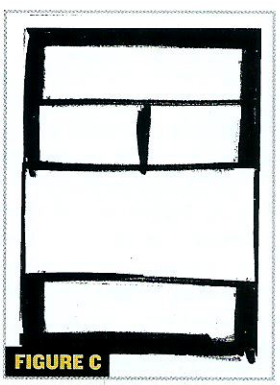


FIGURE C

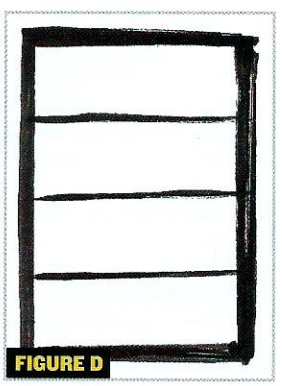
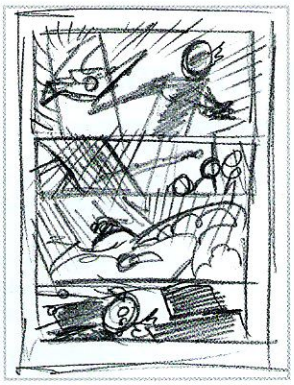
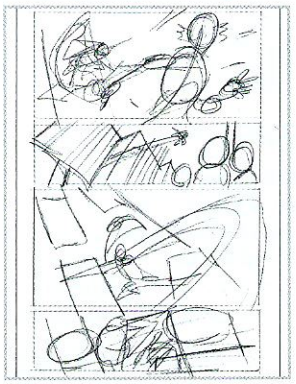


FIGURE D

MARVEL, SPIDER-MAN, GREEN GOBLIN ™ & © 2007 MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.





THE THUMBNAILS

I draw my initial thumbnails as small as possible (2" x 3") in order to be able to see the whole thing at once. Also, by doing such small pencil drawings, I don't get attached to them and am more able to alter the drawings later.

The first panel is a medium shot, shot at a slight up angle to feel the menace of the Green Goblin. I enlarge the panel size since we need to see good establishments of both main characters for the next few pages. The second panel I thin down to expand the horizontal movement of the Goblin. The third panel is enlarged because so much information needs to be conveyed, and we get a cool shot of Spidey and Goblin with different size figures to make the page look more interesting. Finally, in the last panel I went inside the car to really feel the impact of Goblin and Spidey.

PENCILING

Once I'm happy with the thumbnails, I begin roughing in the page full-size. I compare the thumbnails to the actual page, making sure everything relates, double-checking for word balloon space, etc. A lot of pencilers actually enlarge their thumbnails from the small size to full-size and then trace them off, but I really enjoy drawing full-size and trying to capture the essence of the initial little drawings.

Next, I start working on the first panel at the top of the page. You can start with the panel that excites you most; however, working top to bottom, left to right prevents smearing. I find the horizon line and all the perspective points in the panel, then draw in a perspective grid based on those points, with light blue pencil (Figure E). A lot of times the grid helps solve drawing and compositional problems by just having "something" in the panel. After that, I rough in the figure in blue pencil (Figure F) before moving on to the final pencils (Figure G). In this sequence, a lot of the figure is unseen and goes into the other panel. Go ahead and draw right into that next panel. Don't guess; just draw it now and erase it later.

FIGURE E

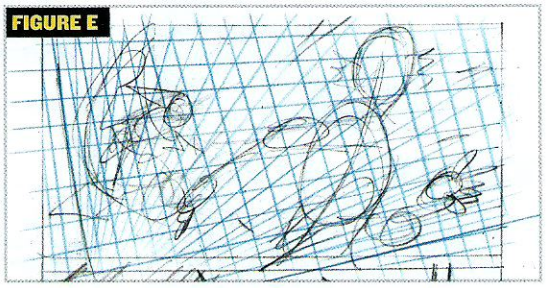


FIGURE F

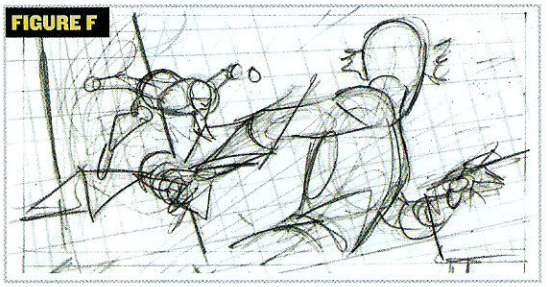
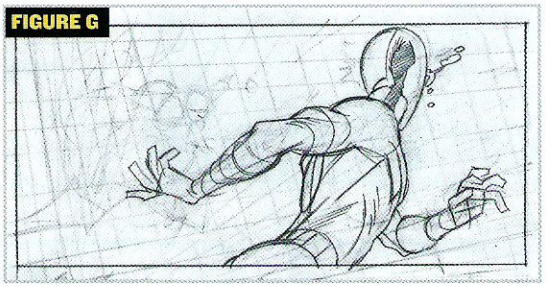


FIGURE G



THE DETAILS

After I'm satisfied with the construction of the drawing, I erase it with a gray kneaded eraser (which leaves the "ghost" of a drawing behind) and then draw in borders. The panel borders give me restricted space and limitations to draw in. I do the finer line work with an HB pencil.

I then finish penciling and add blacks and background details (Figure H). In this particular panel, I ended up changing the typical perspective I had been using and used a "curved" perspective on the background to really feel the power of the Goblin's glider. Also, I decided to use mostly speed lines to define the background instead of the actual building lines for the same purpose.

FIGURE H





THEFINALPAGE

After I complete the first panel, I go ahead and repeat the process for the rest of the page.

Eventually, we're left with the final pencils ready for the inks. No major changes from my thumbnails. The great thing about thumbnails is if you make all your mistakes at the small size, you don't have to worry about it at the full size. The only thing left is the good part, the drawing!

Terry Dodson has laid the groundwork for a stellar career on titles such as Marvel Knights Spider-Man *and* Wonder Woman.

ADVANCED LAYOUT

BY FRANK, LIEBER, MAHNKE AND MOORE

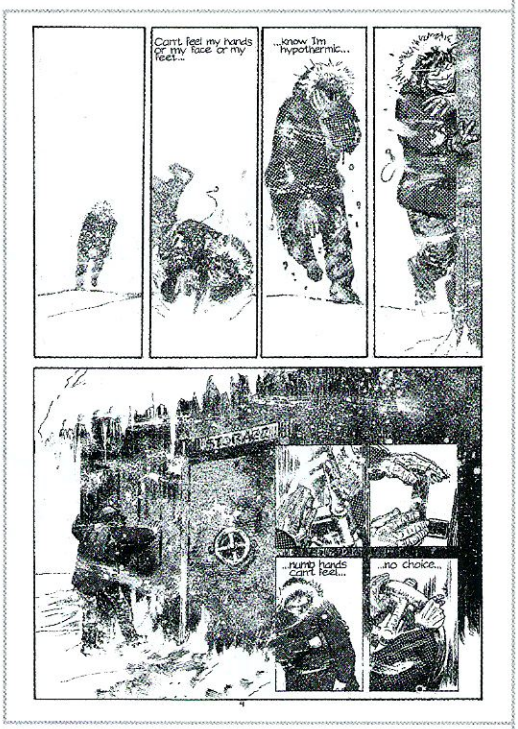
The way an artist lays out a page can make or break a story, no matter how well written it may be. So whether readers realize it or not, layout and sequencing play a huge part in shaping a comic.

Readability is key in panel layout. Breaking out of a standard nine-panel layout may help keep the layout fresh and engaging, but straying too far from standard left-to-right, top-to-bottom layouts can confuse readers and take them out of the story. Utilizing panels in terms of focus, size and number can also add to, or detract from, storytelling.

Concepts like those are just the tip of the iceberg. With so many choices, here are a few tips from the pros to suck a reader right into your scene.

TOTHUMBNAIL...?

"I use lots and lots of tiny little thumbnails. I do them about the size of two postage stamps, two inches tall. I like to make my mistakes small, in a form where there are no consequences. I think most of the important thinking in a comic's development happens at the thumbnail stage. You want to be free to brainstorm and reject some ideas, look and see if you're doing something you've done before and erase it. If I was to just dive in on the page, the first thing I would go to would probably be something that I've done before because I know it works, and it's safe, and it's fast, and it's easy. Whereas if I'm working off of tiny little thumbnails, I can push myself harder to try something that I haven't come up with before." ■ Steve Lieber (*Detective Comics, Whiteout*)



FREEZE FRAME ▶ To figure out a complex scene of U.S. Marshal Carrie Stetko's battle against hypothermia in *Whiteout* #2, Steve Lieber maps out the action with thumbnails.



...ORNOT TOTHUMBNAIL?

"I don't [use thumbnails]. I'm pretty low-tech and use a regular H pencil. I don't use rulers or anything; I just kind of sketch it onto the board. It's all pretty fluid at that stage. I'll push panels around and mess around with panels if they don't seem to be working, but it's very seldom that you'll need to start a page [over] again, simply because you're not putting down anything hard enough that it can't be changed at that stage.

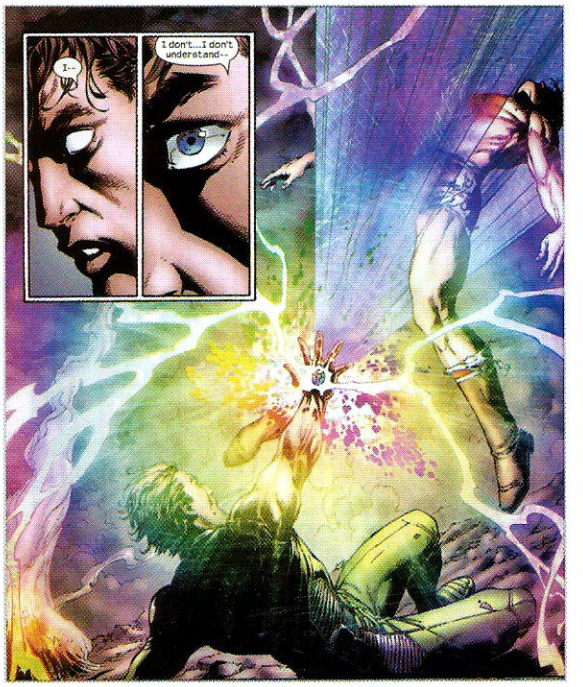
"Sometimes what I'll do is sketch out three pages at once, but I won't jump ahead in the book. The problem with that approach, as I found early on in my career, is that you tend to draw the pages that you want to draw and then you kind of have a mental block with the rest, because [on the later pages] you're doing the stuff that you put off, the stuff that you didn't really want to do." ■ Gary Frank (*Avengers, Squadron Supreme*)

◀ **SHAKE THINGS UP** Gary Frank doesn't like to use thumbnails, so well-crafted gags like Namor's rejection of Cap's membership proposal in *Avengers* #61 flow directly onto his drawing board.

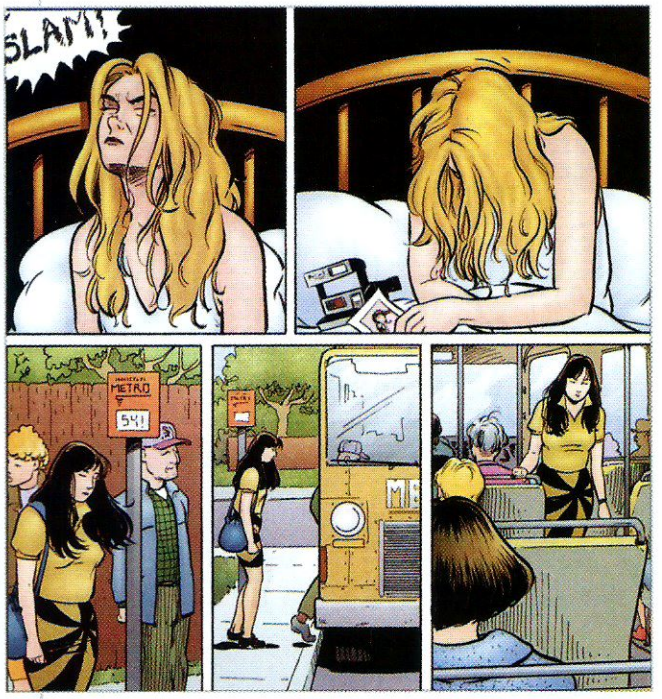
WHITEOUT™ & © GREG RUCKA. CAPTAIN AMERICA, NAMOR AND WASP™ & © 2007 MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

FIRSTTHINGSFIRST

"Read the script. Basically, just give it a quick read-through on a page-by-page basis. I look to see how many panels there are per page, then I read through it again and try to work out which [panel] is going to need to be the impact shot—if there's going to be an impact shot on any of the panels—and then work around that. If there's a particular image, something that's particularly striking about that page, then I'm kind of mentally allocating extra space for that and trying to find a way to move the other, smaller panels and the less important things around." ■ Gary Frank (*Avengers, Squadron Supreme*)



DEEP IMPACT ▶ Gary Frank will shrink panels to free up more room for an impact shot, as with this Hyperion vs. Dr. Spectrum slugfest in *Supreme Power* #8.



SCENESHIFTS

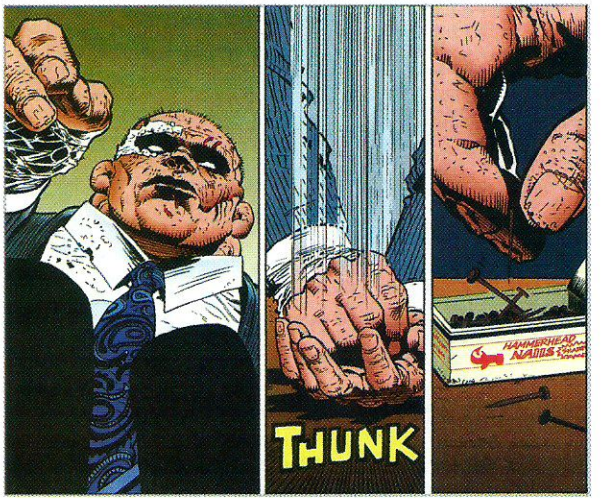
"I start with what I think of as the first scene. I think of my book as having three, four, five scenes in it, like a TV show. I have a setup interior, then I have a setup outside, then I have a setup on location somewhere. Sometimes when I get halfway through the book or near the end, I start rearranging scenes, or I may take the pages and interlace them so that as you read it you're bouncing around more. It's kind of like being an editor for a TV show. Drawing those pages is just like shooting it with a camera." ■ Terry Moore (*Strangers in Paradise*)

◀ **CHOP CHOP** Quick scene cuts, like the jump from Katchoo's bedroom to Francine getting on the bus in *Strangers in Paradise* #5, will speed up your pacing.

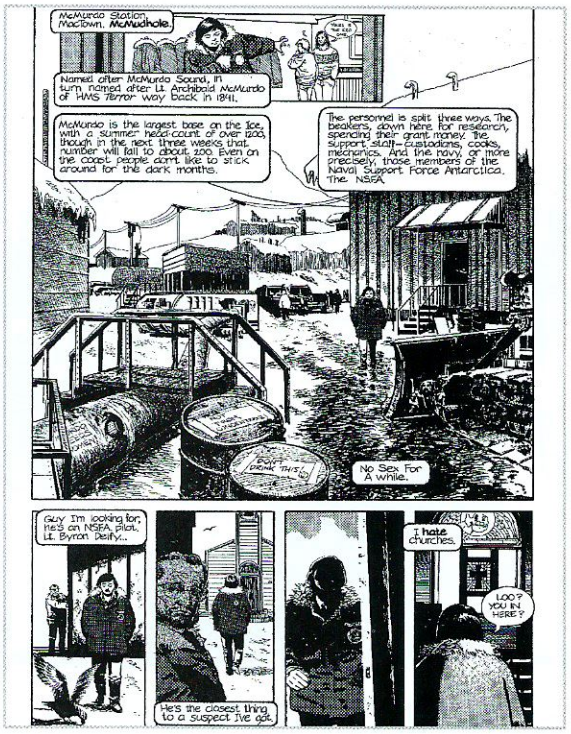
REPETITION EQUALSBORING

"I've grown to really like either doing very narrow panels or very wide panels, as a rule, in my own stuff. If I can do something that's tall and narrow, I'll do it, if it can fit enough information. But if you've got a lot of people speaking or multiple layers of conversation in a single panel, obviously that doesn't work too well. The biggest thing that I focus on is not being repetitive as you turn the page. I don't like to have the same structural layout on one page next to another." ■ Doug Mahnke (*Batman, The Mask*)

THICK OR THIN ▶ In *The Mask Strikes Back* #4, Doug Mahnke puts the masochistic hitman Walter on a diet with a series of taller, vertical panels.



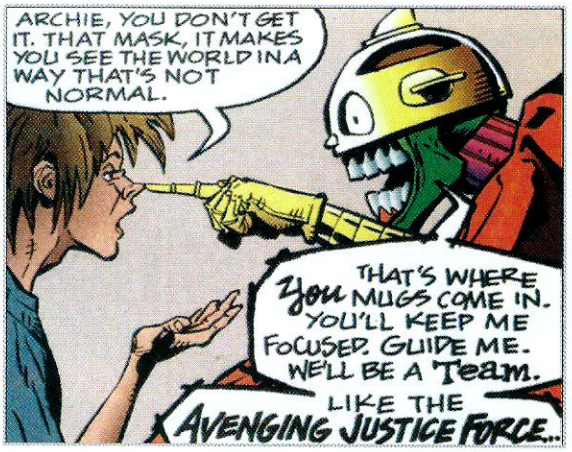
HYPERION & DR. SPECTRUM ™ & © 2007 MARVEL CHARACTERS, INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. *STRANGERS IN PARADISE* ™ & © TERRY MOORE. *THE MASK STRIKES BACK* ™ & © DARK HORSE COMICS.



STORYYELLING

"Sometimes everything on the page is built around, say, three girls standing there talking. I'll give them a full-length panel that'll run top to bottom and build the other dialogue around that. The opposite of that would be, for instance, [in *Strangers in Paradise* #76] where one of the guys is in the middle of an argument with Katchoo and he pays her a compliment. I wanted to show several panels in a row where her whole demeanor changes. So I went to little squares and just showed her face change over three or four panels." ■ Terry Moore (*Strangers in Paradise*)

THE OL' SWITCHEROO ▶ *Strangers in Paradise*'s Katchoo receives a compliment in the middle of a co-worker's tirade, and it changes her whole perception of the conversation.



CHOOSINGTHE RIGHTNUMBER

"For the number of panels on a page, more often than not, that's determined in the script. I will occasionally add a panel or two if I think that a pause is good in a scene. I'll add a silent panel. If I'm working with someone like [writer] Greg Rucka, who encourages me to play with these things, I'll sit down with him [to work out certain scenes]. On one occasion, I took a page from five panels to 16 panels, and we worked that out very carefully." ■ Steve Lieber (*Detective Comics, Whiteout*)

◀ **PAUSE & EFFECT** Steve Lieber uses a silent panel (panel five) to delay U.S. Marshal Carrie Stetko before she enters a place she really doesn't want to be in *Whiteout* #1.



WORD BALLOONS

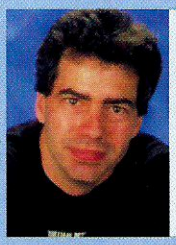
"I don't pencil in any balloons. [Estimating how much room you have] is really something that you gain from experience and it gets easier as you go along. Let's say you have a really wordy panel, an artist is going to shoot himself in the foot by filling it with lush and beautiful backgrounds and endless detail, only to find it all gets covered up by word balloons. I'll certainly work out [panel breakdowns] if I have a real complicated series of word balloons that have to be connected or overlap, just to make sure." ■ Doug Mahnke (*Batman, The Mask*)

◀ **THE LAST WORD** Doug Mahnke might only pencil in figures, as in this panel to the left from *The Mask Strikes Back*, if the panel will be overrun with word balloons.

Award-winning artists Gary Frank, Steve Lieber, Doug Mahnke and Terry Moore have probably laid out enough pages to stretch around the equator 26 times.

WHITEOUT™ & © GREG RUCKA. STRANGERS IN PARADISE™ & © TERRY MOORE. THE MASK STRIKES BACK™ & © DARK HORSE COMICS.

SPLASH PAGES BY JIM CALAFIORE



Show 'em where ya live. When I was a kid playing baseball in Little League, what we'd yell out to a teammate batting at the plate—"Show 'em where ya live." It meant, *hit a home run.* It was a challenge wrapped up in encouragement—just like each chance to draw a splash page. Whenever I get a new plot and I'm going over the splash page, I feel like the writer is saying *"Show 'em where ya live!"* It's my opportunity to knock one out of the park.

Which is why I start to look for a place to hide when I sometimes hit a dribbler to third. Everyone does it from time to time, but it's not a good thing, so let's look at how I try to avoid that.

STEPPINGUPTOTHEPLATE

There's often more than one chance in an issue for a home run, but what we're examining here is the opening splash page, usually on page one. It can be the most important page, and more than just a "money shot." It sets the tone of the story. Ideally, it grabs the reader and propels him into the rest of the issue.

And, from a strictly mercenary point of view, it can determine a sale to the browsing customer. If the splash doesn't grab them, back on the rack it goes. First impressions can be everything.

Here's our scenario: an action shot. The Hulk and Daredevil are in mid-battle on a New York City street, devastation all around. The Hulk is pounding the pavement with a powerhouse blow that ol' Hornhead has just leapt clear of.

PRO TIPS

TAKE A STAND

"A person's posture can tell us his age, social status, vocation, even what he's thinking. Concentrate on the spine, shoulders and bend of the knee." —Rags Morales, *Identity Crisis*

THESWING

My first step in working out an image is a series of small sketches called thumbnails. They're very rough—the characters barely more than stick figures—but it's the best way to run through ideas quickly.

These first two are similar. In both I'm using the perspective lines of the building to focus the eye. **Figure A** is looking down at the combatants in a crater of destruction, while **Figure B** is at ground level looking on from one end of a trail of destruction. The perspective gives a nice feel, but both suffer from the same shortcoming. The characters are too far away from us. On a splash, unless there's a plot reason against it, I want to be close to the action.

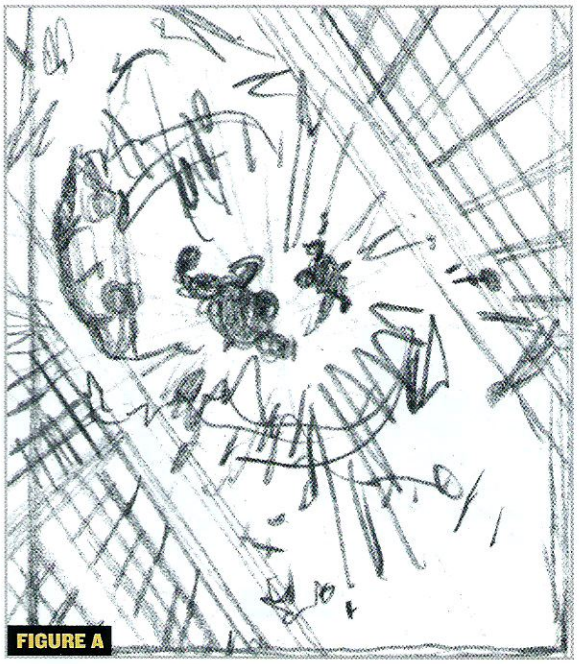


FIGURE A

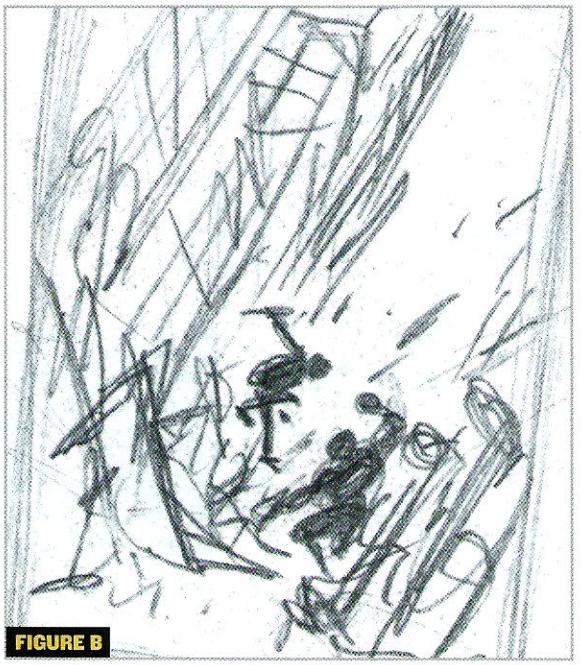
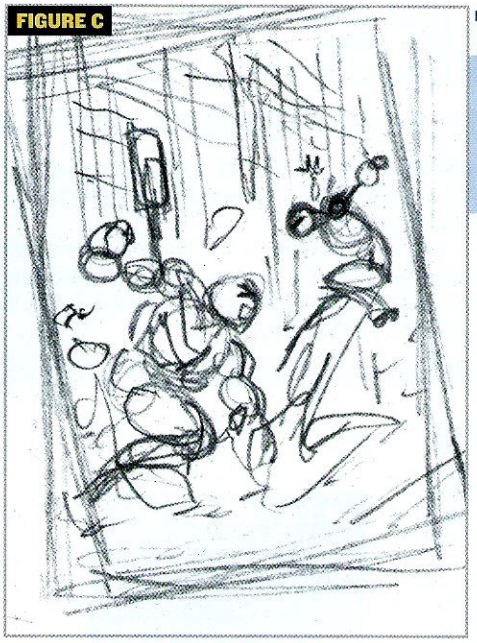


FIGURE B

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FIGURE C



THEFOLLOW-THROUGH

The next idea, **Figure C**, is fine, but that's all it is. Everything is there (the Hulk, DD, the city in the background, etc.), but I didn't do anything interesting with it. I'll often have an "okay" idea which I'll take a second look at, and think about rotating the camera for more interesting positions.

FIGURE D



Figure D's better. Moving the camera around to behind Daredevil now has the Hulk coming more toward us, involving us in the action. The only problem here is that Daredevil isn't facing us. I want both characters facing us, so I played with the DD figure separately **(Figure E)**. I used the old facing-us-but-not-facing-us dodge: Twisting the figure by turning Daredevil's torso mostly toward us, then turning his head to look back at the Hulk, keeps his face at least in profile.

FIGURE E

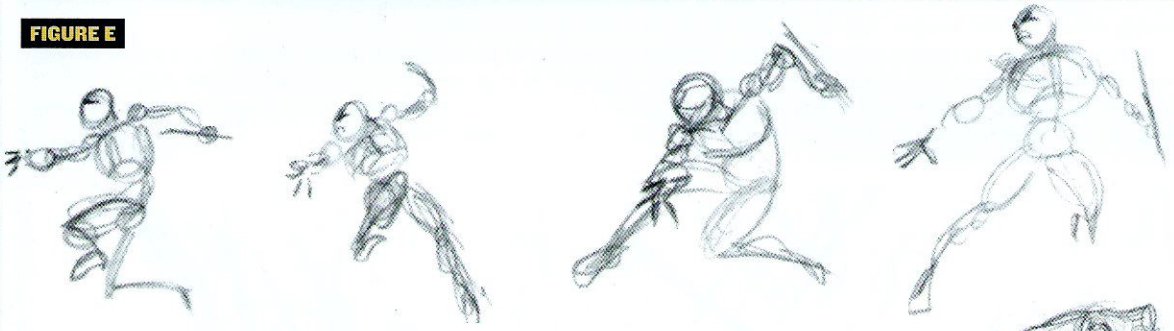
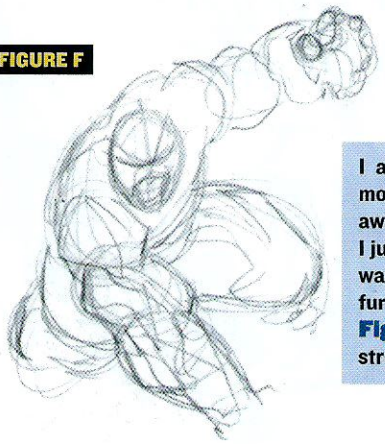


FIGURE F



I also wanted to tweak the Hulk a bit. His motion in the thumbnail is down and to the left, away from Daredevil. To have him going at DD, I just flopped the figure **(Figure F)**. But I still wasn't happy with the pose, and pushed it further to put more oomph in the blow. Look at **Figure G**—he's really jack-hammering the street now! All of which led to the next step.



FIGURE G

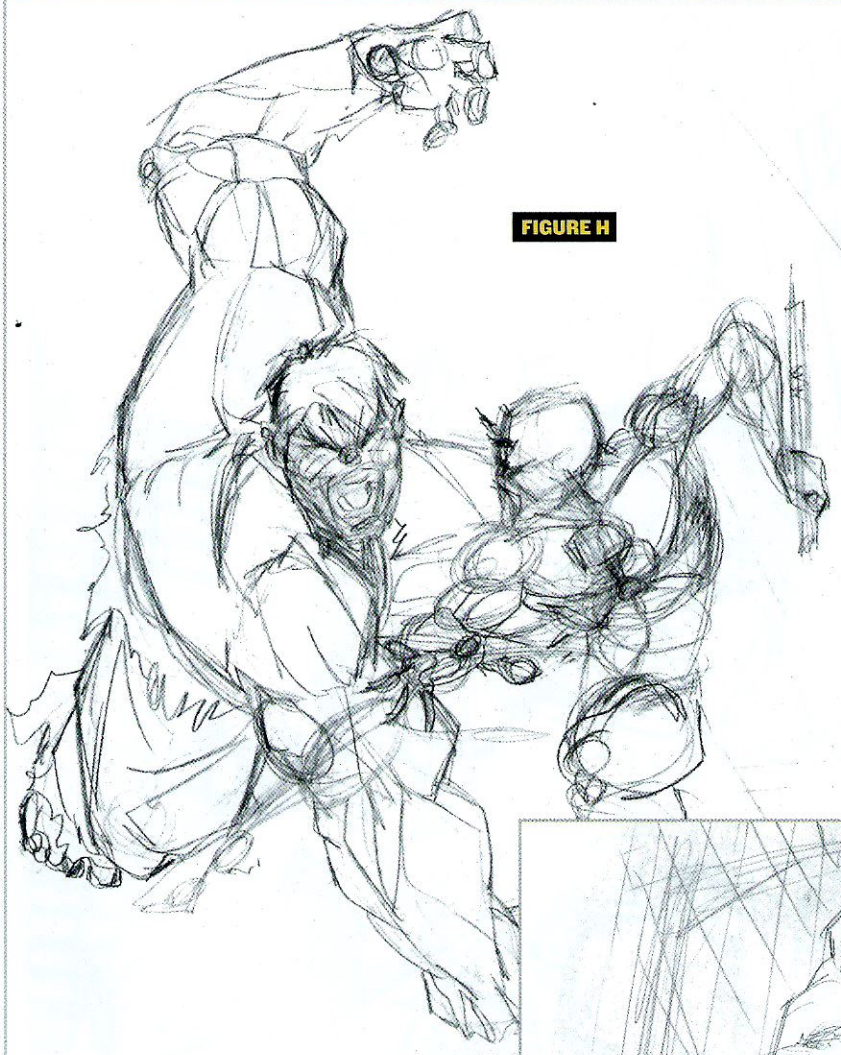


FIGURE H

STRIKE ONE

Figure H is a larger, more detailed sketch, putting it all together. "But why isn't it finished?" you ask. Well, at this point I realized it wasn't working. Remember, I said that the first splash should propel the reader through the rest of the book. While I now have a more interesting angle, there just isn't enough excitement. That's the point of this process: to find what doesn't work as well as what does.

Oh well, back to the drawing board. Literally.



FIGURE I

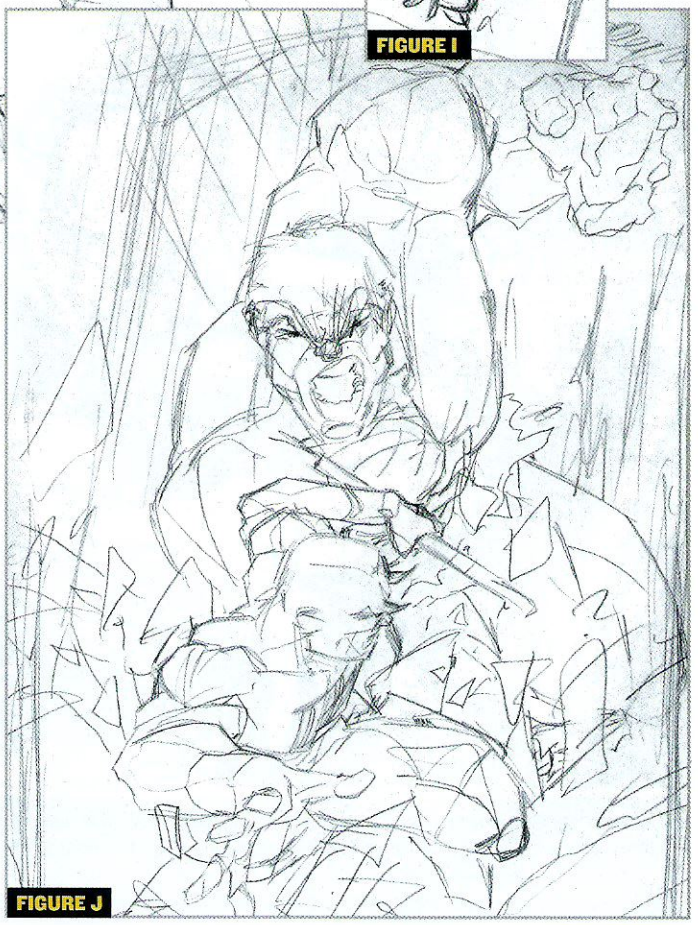


FIGURE J

CRACK!

Now **Figure I** is more like it.

We've got the Hulk coming right at us, tearing up the pavement. A dodging Daredevil is also coming towards us, squeezed between the Hulk and the camera (stuck between a rock and a hard place, so to speak), so close that he can smell the broccoli Hulk had for lunch on the green guy's breath.

In the more detailed layout **(Figure J)**, I rotated the Hulk a bit to put more punch in his punch and added the flying debris around DD. Behind the Hulk you can see lines indicating where I plan to put some buildings to establish the city.

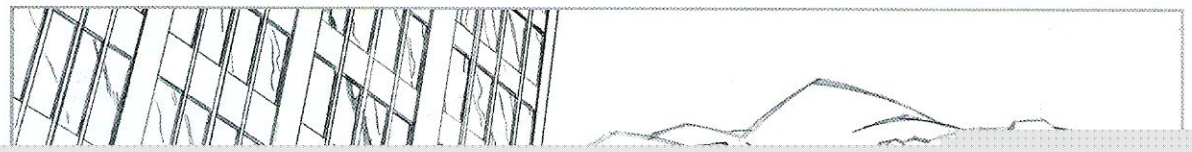


FIGURE G



FINISHED PENCILS

This is the fun part. All of the rendering and detail work come into play (Figure G): Thor's hair, the clouds, cracks on the buildings, texture, mist, etc. As with the previous step, I try to keep a sense of balance on the page. I don't want any of it to feel over-rendered or as though I gave less thought or attention to any other section. To wrap up, I'd like to point out that carefully planning your page right from the start will give you much better results. Figure out what you want to achieve on the page and attack it!

Now on to Scott!

PRO TIPS

SMILE!

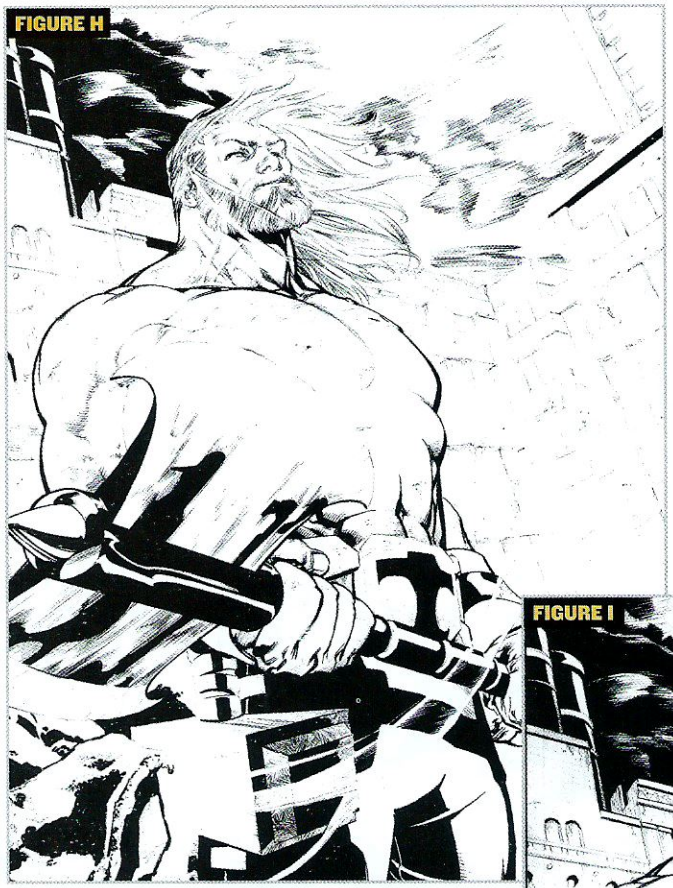
"Drawing characters with realistic smiles on their faces really seems to attract reader attention. Fans are so used to seeing bleak, harsh grimaces and scowls, that looking at, say, Wonder Woman smiling back at them is effective somehow. Comics needn't always be so negative. Positive images, because of their rarity in this medium, seem to sell better right now." —Ethan Van Sciver, *Green Lantern: Rebirth*

BRUSHINGUP

After I receive Tom's pencils, I usually give him a call to exclaim over his excellent work! Tom is a very tight and clean penciler. In a lot of ways, he makes my job easier because he has already done so much work with the textures, the lighting and the attention to detail. On the other hand, it's now my job to keep all of his fine work in the translation to inks and enhance it if possible.

I try to analyze the style of the particular artist I'm working with. Tom's style tends to be organic and fluid, not sharp and angular, illustrative as opposed to graphic. Therefore, I do most of the beginning stages with brush and ink to keep the fluidity of his line and style. Over another penciler I might start with pen instead of brush.

FIGURE H



FILLINGTHE BLACKS

I begin with a #4 sable brush, painting in all of the large black areas first and the main outlines of the body and hands (**Figure H**). This enables me to quickly get a feel for the major light source, the balance of the blacks on the page and a good sense of form. It is also a great feeling of accomplishment seeing that a large part of the drawing is covered quickly.

I tend to start with the bottom of the page and work my way up. When starting with a pen, I usually work down from the top left so I don't smear the pen lines. None of my rules are permanent. I adjust them according to the art. Every page is different, so every page is inked differently.

FIGURE I



FINISHTHE BLACKS

I continue with the large brush and finish the black areas in the sky (**Figure I**). I start using a bit of dry brush technique (allowing the ink on the brush to dry out slightly before painting with it) in the clouds to make them a different texture than the nearby hair. While I'm up there, I start some of the line work on the face, neck and hair. To do the buildings, I use a #102 crow quill pen and a straightedge (I use a plastic triangle with an inking lip) to outline the black areas and do some of the straight-line work before finishing the blacks. I prefer the crow quill to technical pens. Tech pens have only one even line width. This is called a dead line, as it has no life to it. With a quill pen I can vary the line thickness without changing pens or retracing lines.


FIGURE J

THE FINE BRUSHWORK

I now switch to a #3 sable brush for a little more control with the finer detail (Figure J). The main concentration here is the hair and beard. Again, I use the brush to keep the flow and texture of the hair fitting with Tom's style. A pen can make the hair feel scratchy or stiff. Tom pays a lot of attention to the hair, so I do, too. It takes practice and control with a brush to do this kind of detail. For many beginning inkers, hair is the hardest thing to master.

ARM AND AXE

After I finish the hair, beard and eyebrows, I go back to the #102 pen and start some of the feathering on the axe and Thor's arms (Figure K). I want the axe to feel metallic, so the lines are kept very smooth and even. I use a French curve with the pen to make the axe head feel man-made and technical. Clouds are rougher and done freehand in order to seem natural. This is very subtle in the printed comic, but the eye can see it. The details can tell an almost subliminal message to enhance the imagery.


FIGURE K

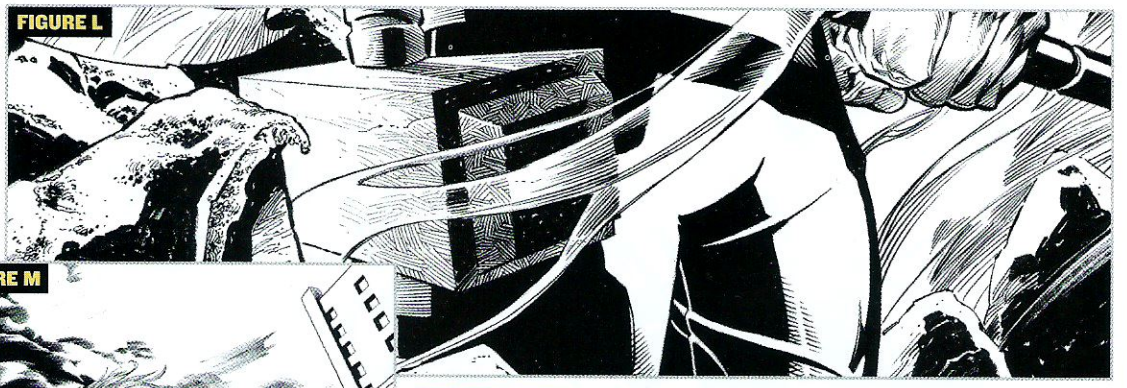

FIGURE L


FIGURE M

TEXTURE

Now that all the large blacks and outlines are done, it's time to concentrate even more on the details (Figure L). For the foreground rocks and hammer I use a #108 pen point. This pen is more flexible and has a wider range of thick to thin lines. I have been aware of texture throughout, but now it becomes the focus. The tarmac rubble, hammer, smoke and hands should feel quite different from each other. Tom is great with textures so his efforts allow me to push it even further. This section of the page is now complete.

THE FINE PENWORK

Tom's level of detail requires more fine linework than most, so the majority of the penwork is accomplished with the #102 (Figure M). I may use three or four different pens on other pencilers' work to achieve various styles. Using the straightedge and pen, I ink the main lines of the closer building. Then, I work on the details and shading of Thor, finish the axe and hammer and add a bit more to the clouds.

FINISHED PAGE

The fine linework can be time-consuming, but the end results are worth the effort. Using the same pen, I complete the sky and Thor's face. Then, I do the texture linework on the buildings. Here I decide to add some extra touches to some of the windows in order to increase their variety. Blacks are also added in the windows near Thor. This adds dimension, balances the black levels in the background buildings and, most importantly, helps accentuate Thor.

Lastly, I finish up the body hair and belt buckle, and the inks are done.



THE ORIGINAL black-and-white art is complete, but the teamwork continues. Dan Jurgens does the scripting after receiving a copy of the finished pencils. The page is scanned into the computer and sent to the colorist, Dave Kemp, and then the letterer. Then, we get to start all over again on the other 21 pages in order to finish the issue!

Tom Raney and Scott Hanna have dropped their artistic hammer on many titles, including DC's Outsiders.

PROFESSIONAL CRITICISM

BY ANTHONY PEARCE & JOE KUBERT



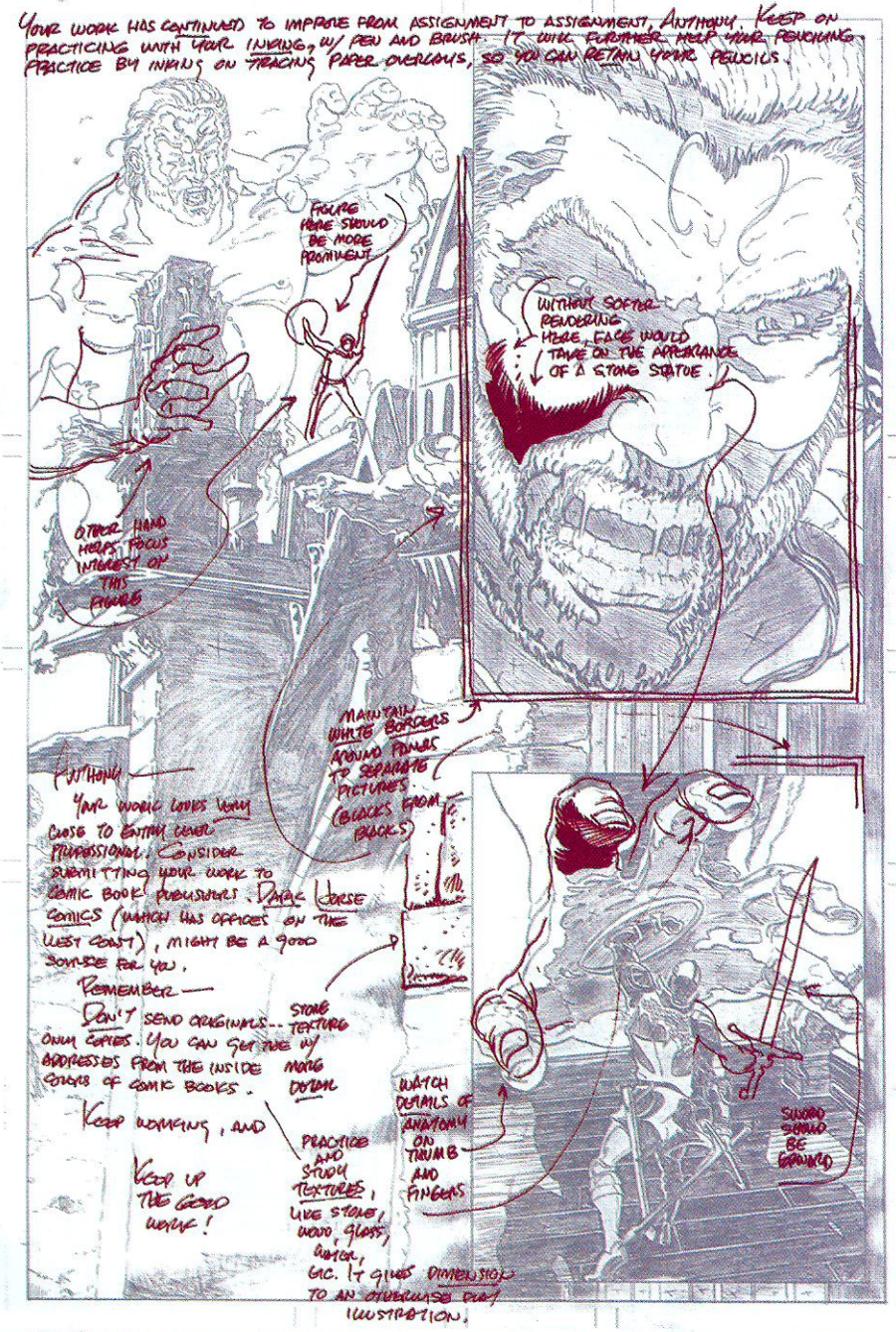
No matter who you are, one of the first lessons any good artist will tell you is "listen to the advice of others." Don't close yourself off to criticism—embrace it, especially criticism that comes from other artists that you respect. Use this criticism to grow as any artist, and you may one day surpass the heights of those whose feedback you heed.

One of the best places on the planet for professional comic book art critiques is the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art Correspondence Course. With more than 25 different lessons in the works, you can learn from greats like Joe Kubert, Andy Kubert, Adam Kubert and Tom Mandrake, with each course tailored to specific subject matter that best suits your needs. You can sign up for the courses via the web at www.kubertsworld.com.

Wizard asked one aspiring artist, Anthony Pearce, to register for the "Penciling" course. The legendary Joe Kubert himself (*Sgt. Rock, Hawkman*) critiqued Pearce's work, and this lesson shows samples from that course to show you how to turn quality first attempts into professional-level panels.

STORYTELLINGPART2

The final assignment is a great exercise in scale, pacing and drama. A giant approaches a castle, and the knight atop it bravely readies his sword. As always, Kubert has some constructive criticism on the actual panels: "Without softer rendering [on the giant's] face, it would take on the appearance of a stone statue. Maintain white borders around panels to separate pictures. [In the knight shot,] the sword should be forward."



Pearce learns a lot from the critiques: "My pages are more dynamic, my storytelling stronger, my style's more defined." Kubert sums up the whole process best: "Your work has continued to improve. Keep on practicing with your inking. It will further help your penciling. Practice by inking on tracing-paper overlays so you can retain your pencils. Your work looks very close to entry-level professional. Consider submitting your work to comic book publishers." Not bad for a beginner willing to listen to a pro.

WALLY WOOD'S 22 PANELS THAT ALWAYS WORK!

BY WALLY WOOD



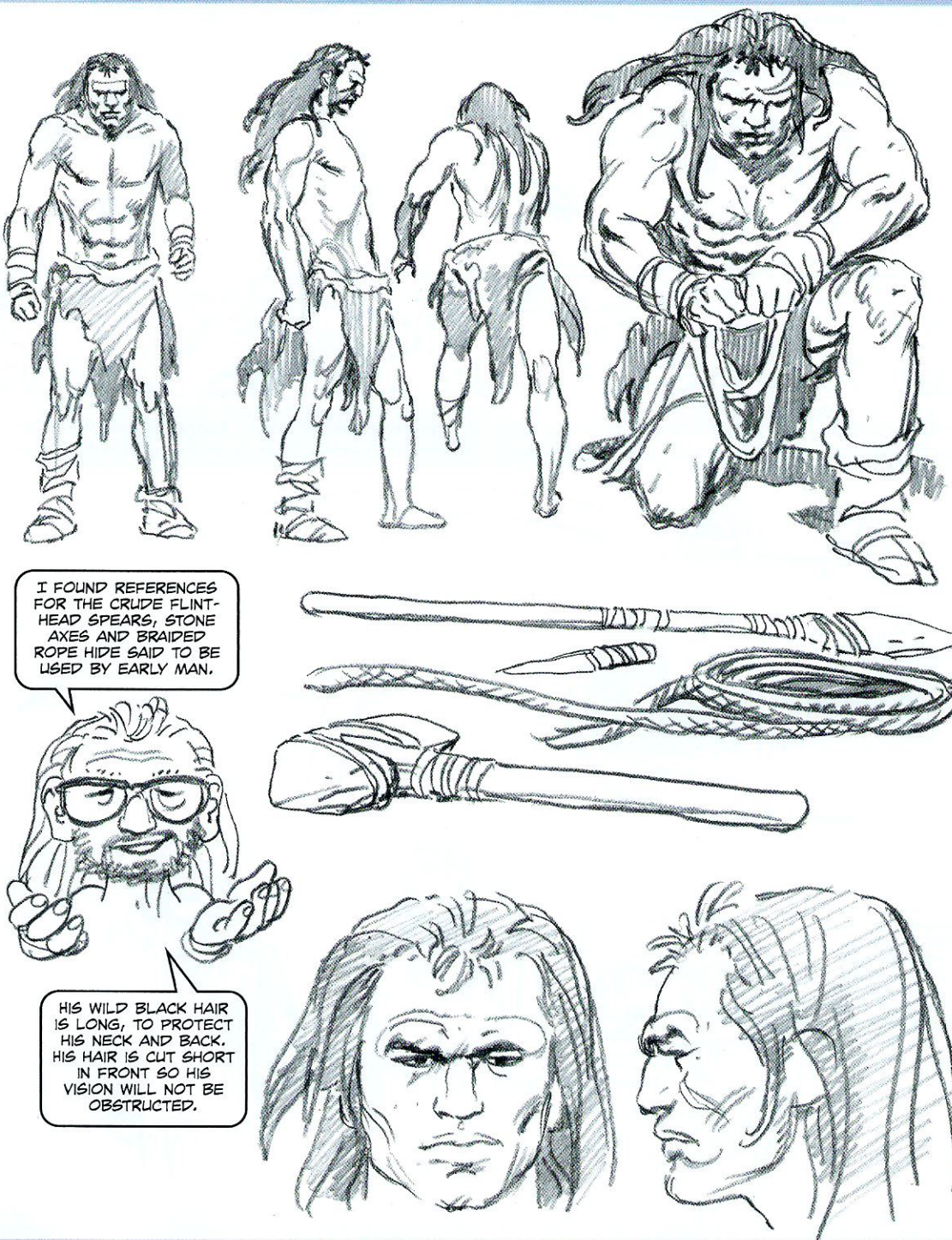
So—get as many pictures as you can, and make sure they're good references. Check the credentials of the dinosaur illustrations (the artists). There were very few cameras around at the time.

If possible, visit your local museums and do some sketches of the dinosaurs on exhibit. There are many good books containing well-researched illustrations. Study the skeletons. How did they move? How big were they? The more you learn about them, the more effective your drawings will be.

Moviemakers have done astounding things in creating worlds that no longer exist—or have never existed. I can only begin to imagine the mountains of research they had to dig through in order to achieve the necessary level of credibility reflected in their films.



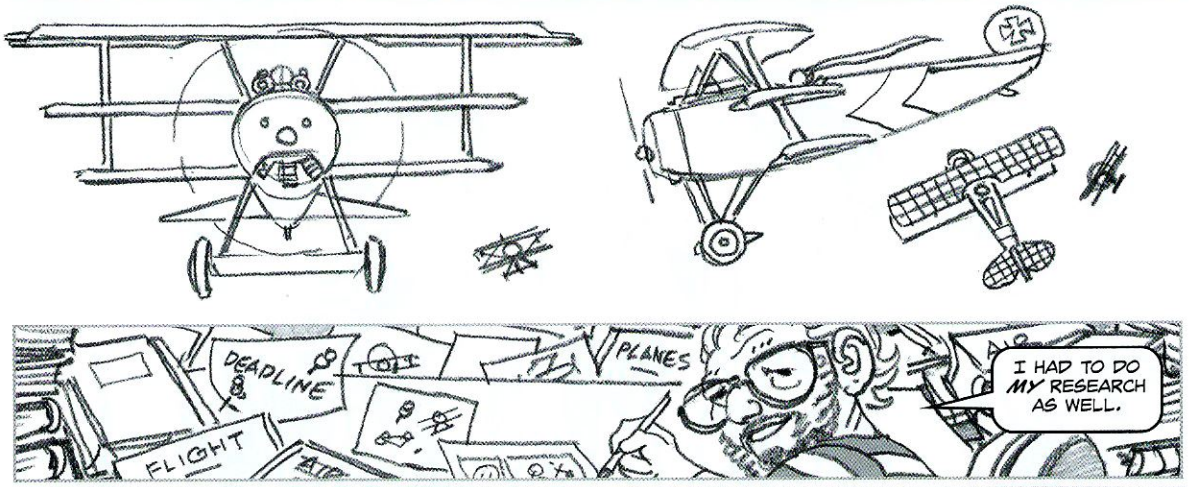
I felt Tor needed to resemble today's man, yet be quite different. Since his very existence would depend on his physical strength, he would be heavily muscled with thick shoulders. Muscles would not stick out like inflated balloons, unless he was exerting himself. Otherwise, he'd look stiff in movement. Besides proper anatomical proportions, I gave him a strong jaw, thicker lips and dark eyes, shaded by a prominent brow. On closer examination, he bore scars from previous encounters with fellow inhabitants both animal and human.



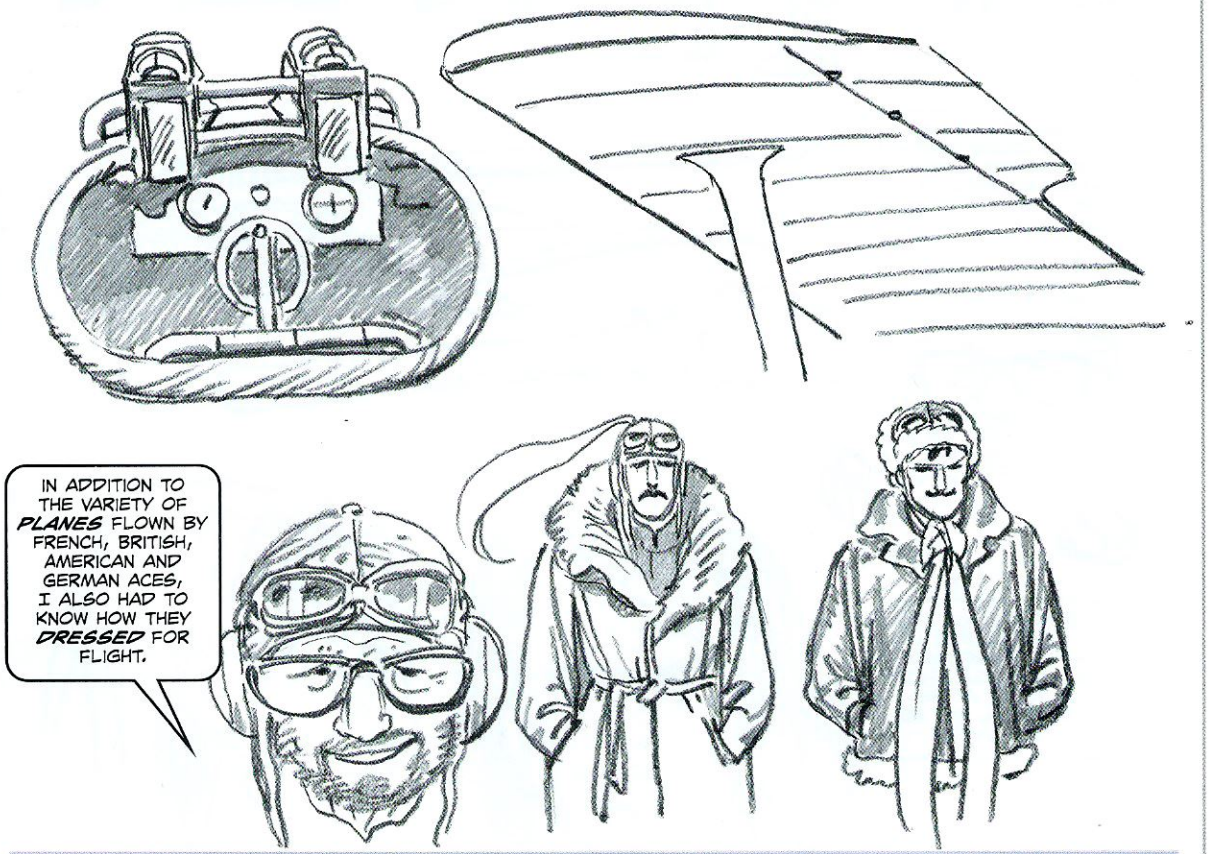
Tor, to me, isn't just a drawing. He's someone I know, someone I want my readers to accept and believe. If you'd like to learn about the entire history and development of Tor starting from his inception about 50 years ago, get the three-volume archive editions of *Tor* published by DC Comics.

Within the last 100 years, the development of flight has gone from small, single-seater wood and canvas airplanes held together by baling wire to interplanetary spacecraft.

I was asked to illustrate a story about air combat during World War I. In addition to the pilots, the other major characters were the airplanes. The story's title was "Enemy Ace," written by Robert Kanigher. He had researched flight tactics, airplane armaments and the kind of men who flew those "flying coffins."



I read books and got as many pictures of vintage aircraft as I could find, showing all angles, including details of construction both exterior and interior. I felt that only then could I convey to the reader what it would have been like to actually fly in one of those airplanes.



There were few standards as far as uniforms were concerned. Some wore leather, fur-trimmed jackets. Others attached bright-colored ribbons to their helmets (like knights of old) and long scarfs that trailed in the wind. They painted their aircraft distinctively, so they could identify their opponents. I included all these elements and more. It made the story and the characters more meaningful to me, and much more enjoyable to draw.



GET YOUR REFERENCES BEFORE YOU START TO DRAW!

1. Get as many pictures as you can of the subjects you intend to draw, from as many angles as possible.

2. Become a "regular" at your public library and local bookstore. Those places contain a wealth of information for every artist and cartoonist.

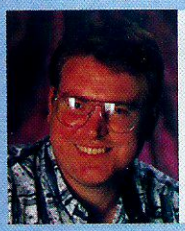
3. Log on to the Internet and in minutes you can find pictures of every conceivable subject.

4. Build your own models. Then, you've got a permanent, three-dimensional example of your subject from every angle.

5. Videos featuring animals, places and things.

6. Visit your local museums, and don't forget your sketchbooks. Draw anything you see that might interest you. You never know when you'll be using those sketches as subjects in a cartoon strip you'll be drawing.

PHOTO REFERENCE BY GREG LAND



Hey, everybody, Greg "Big Red" Land here. This time around, the topic is using reference. An artist uses reference to get a strong visualization of the object(s) to be illustrated. Let's say the story calls for a specific type of early locomotive. Unless the artist is a train enthusiast, he or she won't know what the specific object looks like. Looking up the locomotive in books would be the best way to be sure of accuracy. The list of artists who use reference is long, but a few that I admire are Alphonse Mucha, Olivia, James Bama, Joe Jusko and the great American illustrator, Norman Rockwell. Let's go ahead and take a look at a few examples I've put together.

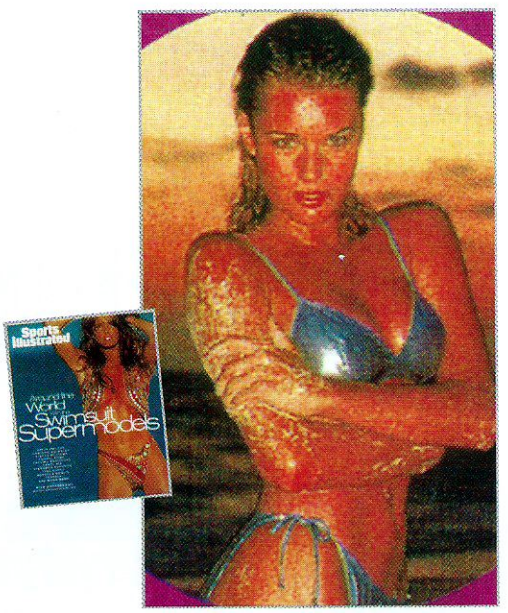
A FEW MORE QUESTIONS

What exactly is reference? Photos, still-life setups, a friend posing, pets, cars, the house across the street, virtually anything. Reference helps give the illustration a sense of accuracy. An example is the way clothes drape across a person's body.

Reference should be used as little or as much as the artist feels comfortable with in order to get the desired illustration, and can be gotten from books, magazines, newspapers, photos by the artist, the environment, almost anywhere.



FIGURE A



STRIKE A POSE

This example shows the heroine Arwyn from *Sojourn* in a relaxed pose (**Figure A**). I found an appealing model (Rebecca Romijn!) in a swimsuit magazine and used her basic stance (the crossed arms and the slight twist of the torso) as my starting point, then added Arwyn's expression, hair and costume. In this example, it was the pose I was after, not the clothes, hairstyle or facial expression.

ALL CHARACTERS ™ & © THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS. PHOTO: PAUL ISCHIALDI.

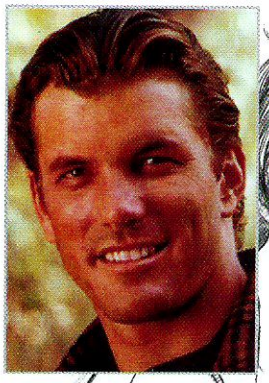


FIGURE B

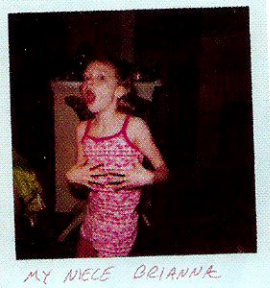


FIGURE C

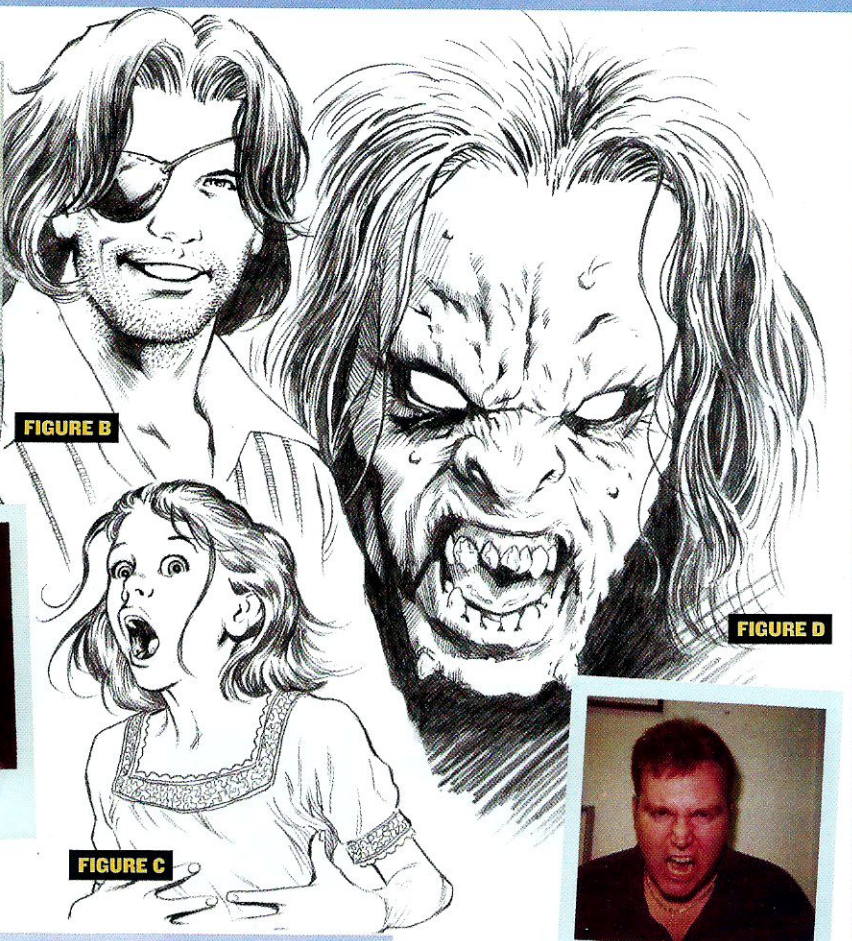
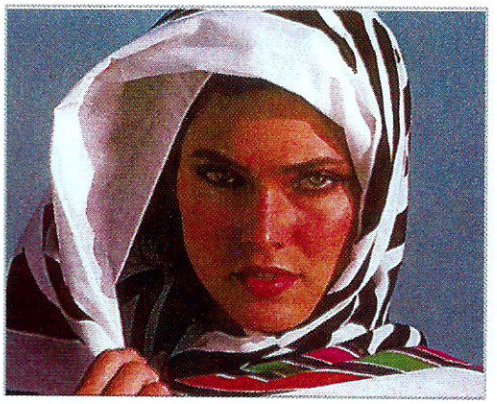


FIGURE D

CLOSE-UPS

I pull photos from my clip files (organized files of cut-out photos from magazines and newspapers), or take photos of my friends or myself for facial expression reference. These examples show how I've used the basic expression from the photo and changed hairstyles and clothing to make the drawing appropriate for the character. *Sojourn*'s Gareth **(Figure B)** is based off a model from a clothing ad. The young girl with the fearful expression is my niece, Brianna. In this example, the character **(Figure C)** looks very much like the photo to the left. On the other end of the spectrum is the troll drawing **(Figure D)**. Looking at the model's exaggerated facial expression (Okay, it's me), I was able to draw the features to get this character. I like to visualize the trolls as actors with Hollywood-style make-up applications. Finally, I drew the lovely Neven **(Figure E)** inspired by this model from an issue of *Sports Illustrated*.



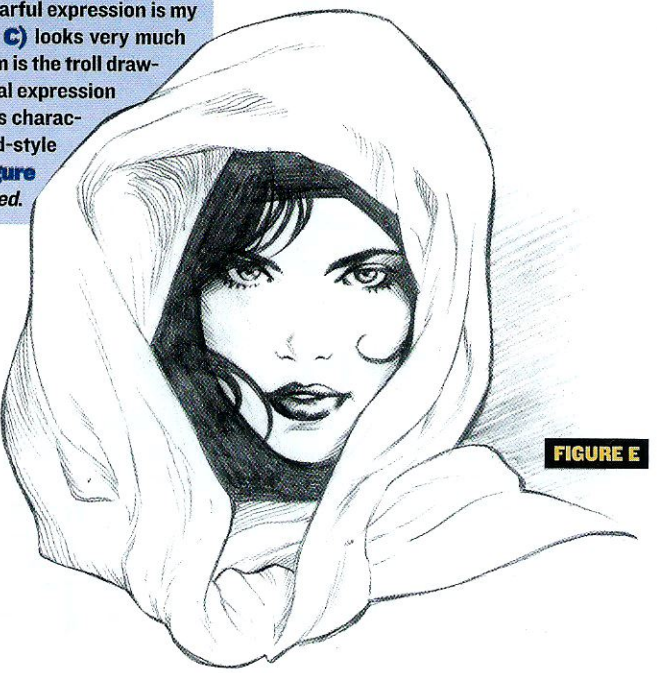


FIGURE E

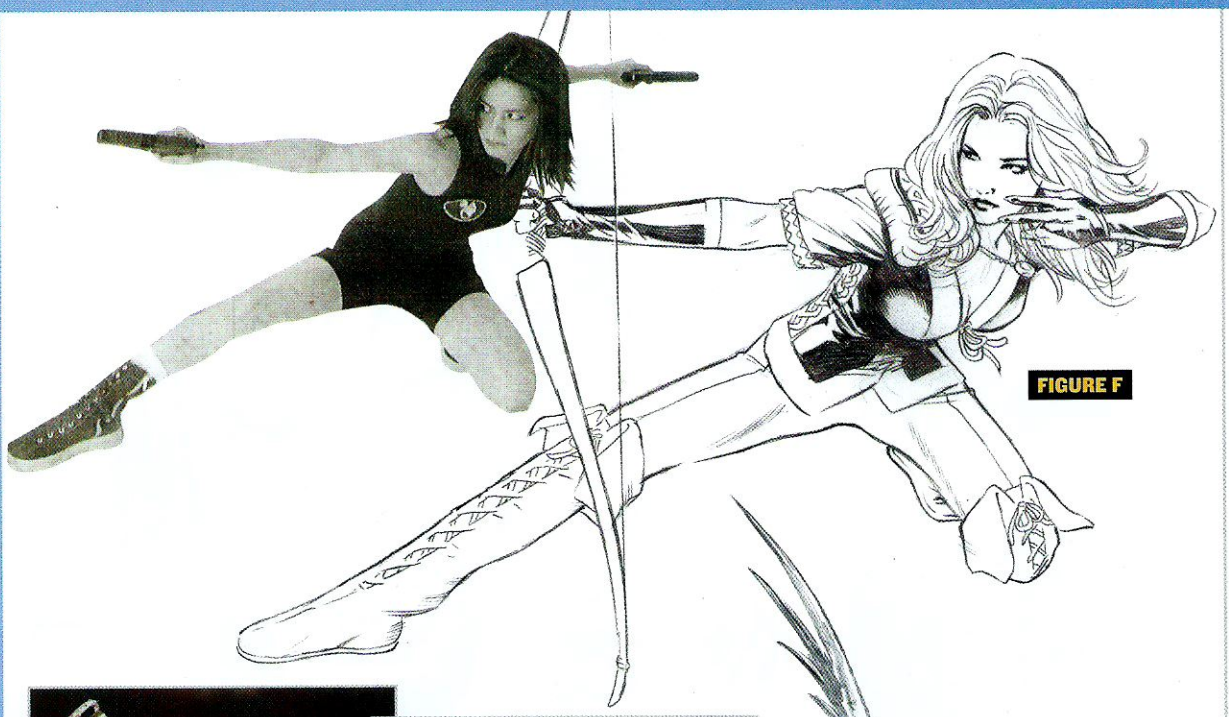
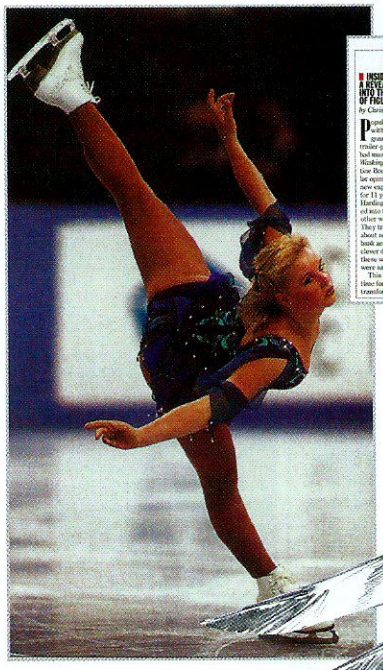
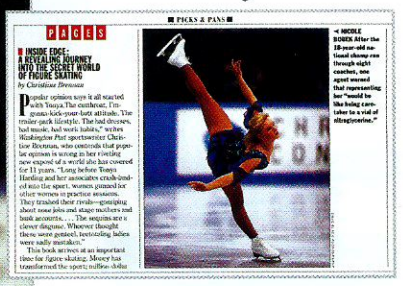


FIGURE F





PAGES

PICKS & PANS

INSIDE EDGE: A REVEALING JOURNEY INTO THE SECRET WORLD OF FIGURE SKATING

by Christine Brennan

Popular opinion says it all started with Tonya. The outburst. I'm-gonna-kick-your-butt attitude. The trailer-park lifestyle. The bad dresses, bad music, bad work habits," writes Washington Post sportswriter Christine Brennan, who contends that popular opinion is wrong in her riveting new exposé of a world she has covered for 11 years. "Long before Tonya Harding and her associates crash-landed into the sport, women gunned for other women in practice sessions. They trashed their rivals—gossiping about nose jobs and stage mothers and bunk accounts. . . . The sequins are a clever disguise. Whoever thought these were genteel, bestowing ladies were sadly mistaken."

This book arrives at an important time for figure skating. Mossy has transformed the sport; ruffles—bibs

■ MIDDLE BORER. After the 18-year-old national champ ran through eight coaches, one agent warned that representing her "would be like being caretaker to a vial of nitroglycerine."

FIGURE G

BODYMOVIN'

These examples show full figures. The first is an action pose of Arwyn firing an arrow **(Figure F)**. My reference for this is a woman shooting a pair of guns. The second drawing is a winged female **(Figure G)**. I'm probably not going to find this in any reference book, but the gracefulness found in many athletes can be helpful. In this case, an ice skater helped with the pose for this flying woman. I got the wings by looking at different photos of birds. (Notice the different tones added to the wings, which are based on an osprey's.) Many times I have asked my wife and friends to act out character movements. I like to use a Polaroid camera to get a quick shot of the action. This is extremely helpful with panel composition, since I can move the model(s) around to get a variety of angles—upshots, downshots, close-ups, medium shots and distant shots. These all help to make the storytelling interesting.

NATURETOUR

Environments—cities, water, castles, houses, woods or any other place the story takes us—are the places where the characters interact. The example I've drawn here is an open clearing leading up to a wooded area **(Figure H)**. Using a photo from *Country's Best Log Homes* helps to show the different shapes that the trees make. By drawing light and dark areas, a believable wooded setting is achieved.



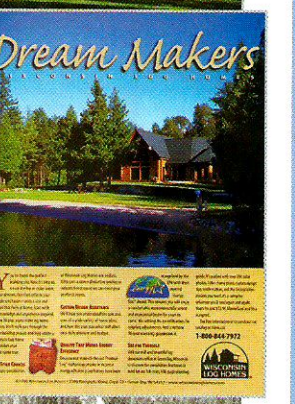
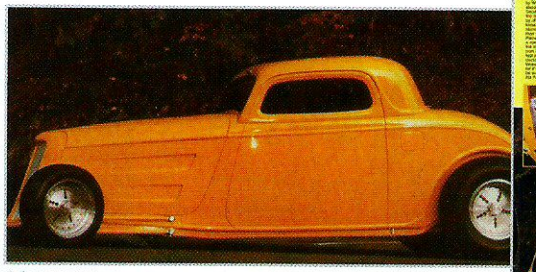
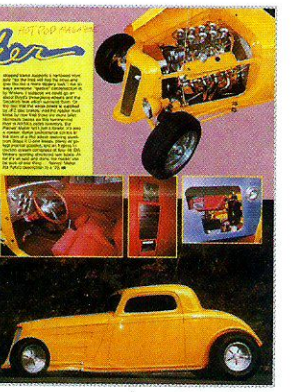


FIGURE H

PROPITUP

Props help to round out the environments and make the stories even more believable. The example I've drawn here is a custom street rod **(Figure I)**. All too often in comic books, cars are incorrectly drawn. A little extra effort of looking through car magazines or even Polaroids of personal vehicles can make all the difference—my model is from *Hot Rod Magazine*.





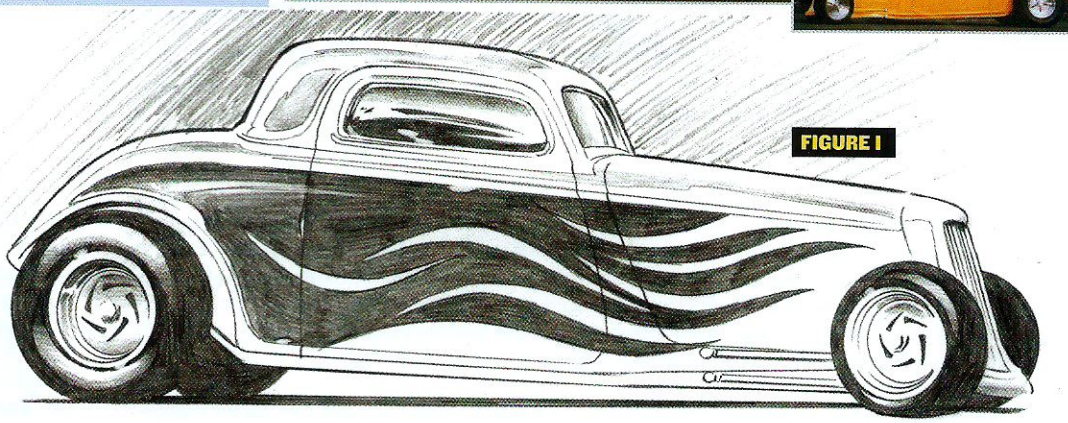


FIGURE I

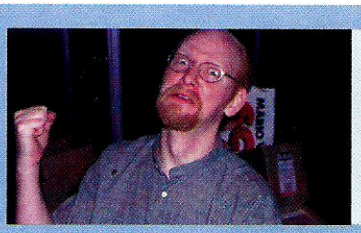


THIS IS A MONTAGE of some of the female characters from *Sojourn*. By using the previous drawings, I created this pinup illustration. I've used heads, figures, props and environments along with some design elements to tie the piece together.

Hope this helps to show how important reference can be when drawing. Have fun with it—clip your magazines, save catalogs (I use my wife's catalogs after she's done with them) and save newspaper ads. Have your friends and family pose for you—this can be pretty funny. If something in a book looks interesting but you have no place to use it at present, make a copy and hang on to it; chances are you will find a place for it eventually. Good luck and keep drawing.

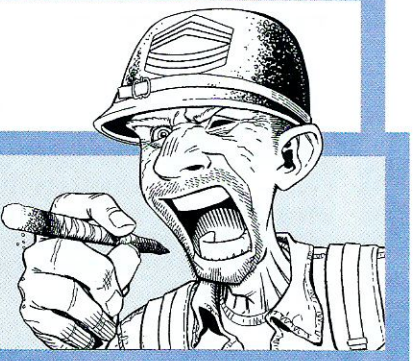
Greg Land's detailed and referenced art has enhanced the pages of CrossGen's Sojourn *and Marvel's* X-Men: Phoenix—Endsong.

TEXTURE BY ART ADAMS



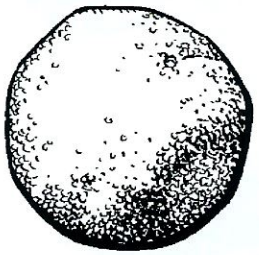
All right, you useless maggots, listen up! Today we're going to talk about texture in comic book drawing! Don't get scared yet, ya pansies! If used properly, texture won't hurt ya!

For those of you who don't know me, my name's Arthur Adams, but you can call me "sir"! Now move, move, *move!*



ORANGEALERT

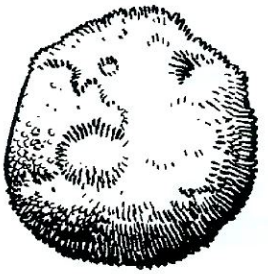
Let's start with something simple: a bunch of oranges. Some of them have been through a lot. And even though the oranges all have different textures, the texture helps to give them shape.



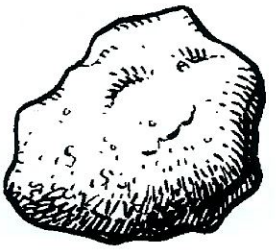
Here's a nice, fresh orange. You might notice I've used tiny, curved lines (more toward the edges, fewer in the middle) to show the orange has depth (thickness) and mass.



This fruit's been chrome-plated. I've used stylized, curved lines inside the orange's outline. This helps convey a sense of reflectivity without going to the trouble of actually drawing everything around the orange reflected in its surface.



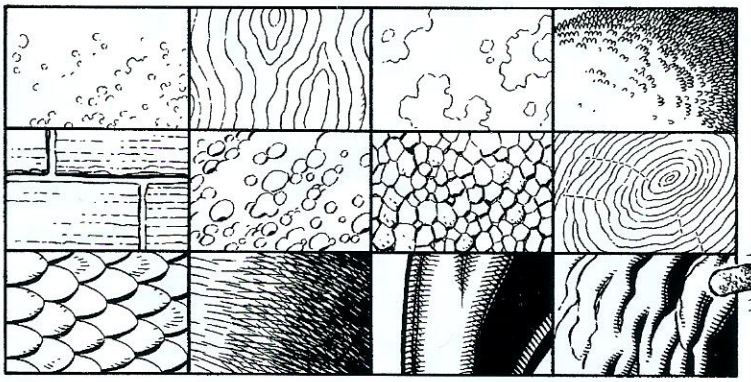
This one's seen better days. I wanted it to look really moldy, so I used short, dashy lines to make it look all nasty and shaggy. Again, I worked with thinner and thicker lines to show this object has mass.



This is ancient! Petrified! Rock hard! You may notice that I used little curve lines and short, dashy strokes. I did this to show it's still an orange, but that it's also hard and dry. Notice the outline isn't as smooth as the first orange, which makes the orange look sort of deflated. Ewwww.

MIXANDMATCH

Here are some random textures. Some might be stone or brick, others might be a fingerprint or wood. Could one be a leather-clad forearm? Perhaps some are different skin types: fish, lizard, human, shaggy ape or even a sort of Godzilla skin. You figure 'em out. I'm bitter.



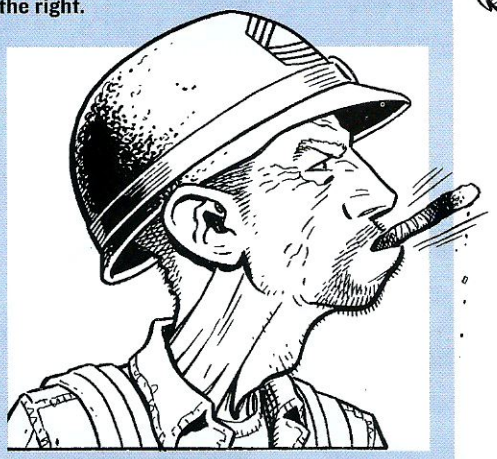


ALL CHARACTERS TM & © THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS

TEXTURE

DEPTHDEFINING

The reason I like using a lot of texture on characters and objects is that it helps convey a sense of depth, weight and mass. One of the most important parts of comic book storytelling is convincing the reader of the reality of the story. Yes, I know comic books are two-dimensional drawings and are therefore clearly not real. But adding texture to your forms helps the reader suspend his disbelief, like in the example to the right.





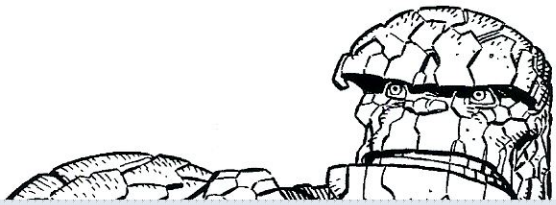
NATUREOFTHEBEAST

Texture can also help define or at least hint at a character's nature. The relative lack of texture on young Ann O'Brien helps to convey a sense of youth and wholesomeness. Be careful not to put too many lines on her face. You don't want to make Ann look old.

The texture for Monkeyman is a little rougher. I've drawn deep wrinkles on Monkeyman's face to show that he's older than Ann. I'm also trying to convey a sense of maturity and wisdom. And notice how the very simple detail in the eyes looks kind of spooky and otherworldly. (At least, I think so.)

While the Shrewmanoid calls for similar textural techniques as Monkeyman, little differences help to show him for the filthy little degenerate that he is. What differences? Well, just look at him! Take note of the little circles and partial circles I drew on him, which just help to make him look dirty. He just looks nasty, don't he?



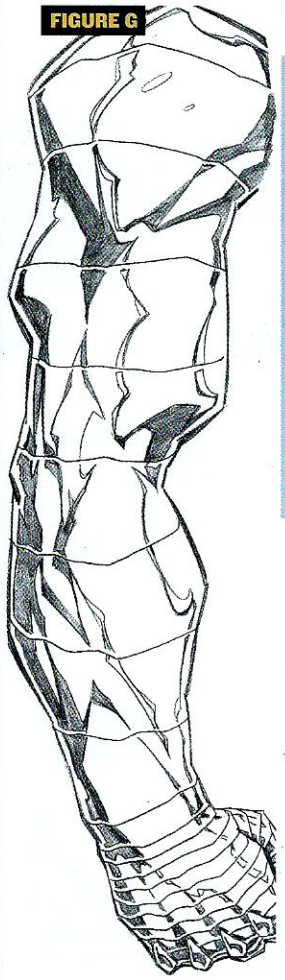


STONECOLDCRAZY

The Thing is a good example of a rough, stony texture. Short, choppy dash strokes help to show this. Use fewer and thinner dash strokes toward the areas you want highlighted on your figure, and thicker lines toward your shaded areas.

When the rendering is done properly, it can help give the illusion of weight and mass. This sort of rendering

FIGURE G

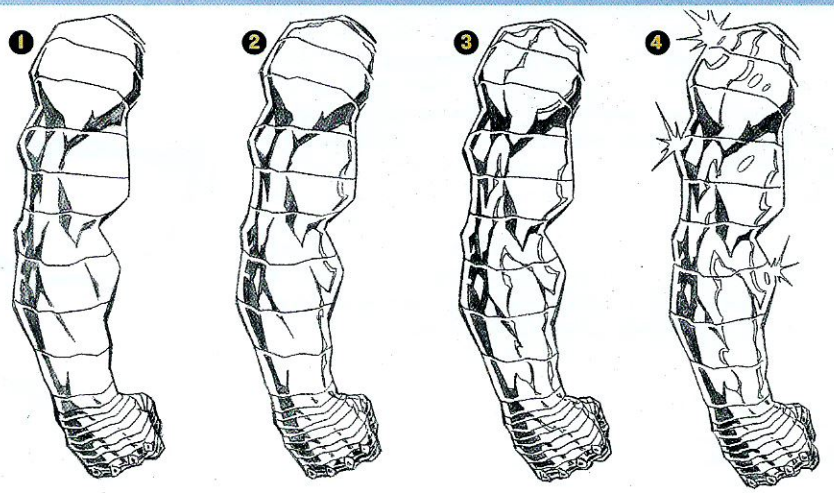


TOARMS!

Skintight metal presents specifically different problems, most of which depend on a good knowledge of the underlying structure (bone, muscle, etc.), since that's what influences the reflective patterns. With this right arm (**Figure G**), I first chose a light source (on "our side" of the arm, at about 2 o'clock), which led to define the areas of deep shadow created by the muscle forms. I then added reflection lines, delineating the reflected light source to the arm's right side. For internal lighting, I used some doubled linework to follow and accentuate the dramatic way in which the irregular musculature catches the light. The linework on skintight metal can have more life and flair to it, but be careful not to go too crazy and obliterate the structure underneath.

Figures G-1 through **G-4** illustrate varying degrees of shine. For a dull, unpolished look (**1**), shade only the areas of deep shadow, leaving the rest unhighlighted. A single highlight line along the opposite edge of the arm (**2**) gives it an instant soft polish. **Number 3** is highly polished where every curve and indentation picks up shadow and light and reflects it back. I usually reserve a sparkling polish (**4**) for otherworldly or fresh-off-the-rack armor. A couple of starbursts off the edges, and a few small ovals of a reflected light source, make for super-shininess.

Also of note here is that these arms are sheathed in banded metal. By leaving a small gap in the shading at the bottom of each band, I've accentuated the fact that all this metal is layered and pieced together.



METALMEN

Metal as skin, for characters like Silver Surfer, doesn't present any new problems, except you need to express more of an overall fluidity. Taking an isolation of the Surfer's right arm (at right) and comparing it with the previous section's arms, you can see they're pretty similar, except for a bit more delineation of the muscle structure of Surfer's arm to make it feel tighter than just a metal sheath. This effect can be pushed even further, to the point where each muscle is its own bundle of metal—each shiny muscle distinctly separated from the other by hard outlines (Colossus' metal form, for example). This again demands a strong knowledge of the muscle structures involved.



METAL LIVES!

Here are some quick techniques with drop-shadows that let your metal exist in real three-dimensional space. Referring back to the previous examples, you can see I've been using these tricks all along.

Using War Machine's left arm **(Figure H)**, I've shaded the individual components (shoulder pad, arm and gauntlet) as if they weren't connected to each other. Each part has its own shape, but as a whole, it's pretty flat. In **Figure I**, I've made an effort to consider how each component affects the other. The gauntlet casts a shadow across the forearm, as the shoulder pad does across the biceps. Comparing the two, the whole illustration "pops" out considerably more in **Figure I**.

FIGURE H

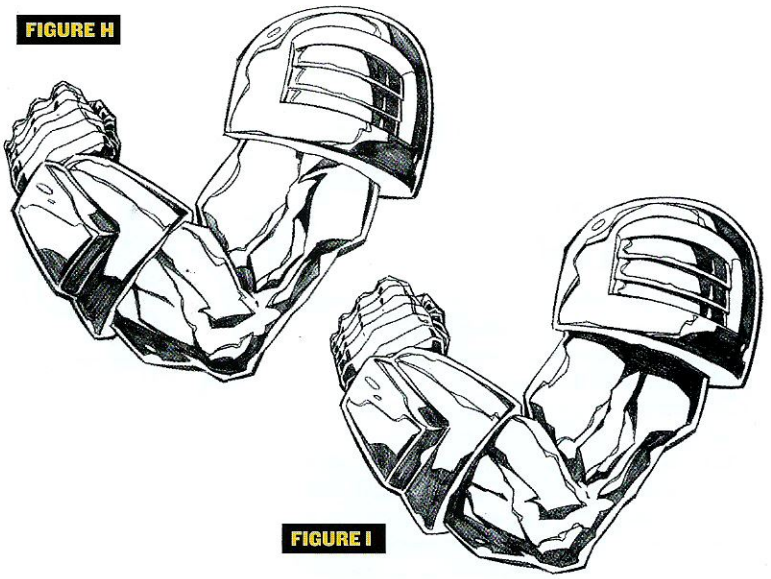


FIGURE I

FIGURE J

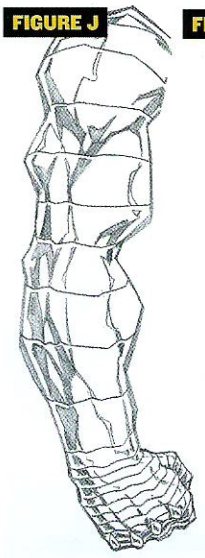


FIGURE K

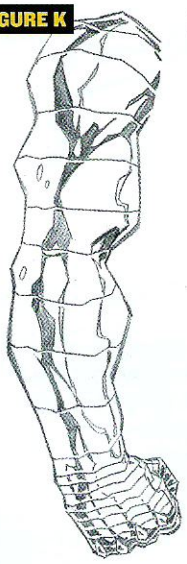
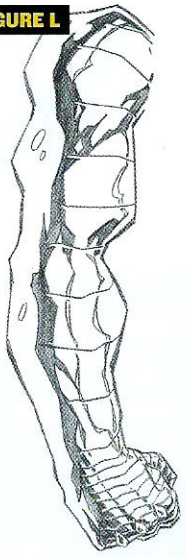


FIGURE L



HALOS

Leaving a thin margin of white (known as a halo) between the shading and the outline of the arm **(Figure J)** is the simplest way to imply a reflective surface. The halos can be altered for different effects. Increasing the depth of the halo **(Figure K)** indicates a strong secondary light source. To increase it to an extremely bright secondary light source, I removed any detail from the haloed area in **Figure L**. Save this one for special moments.

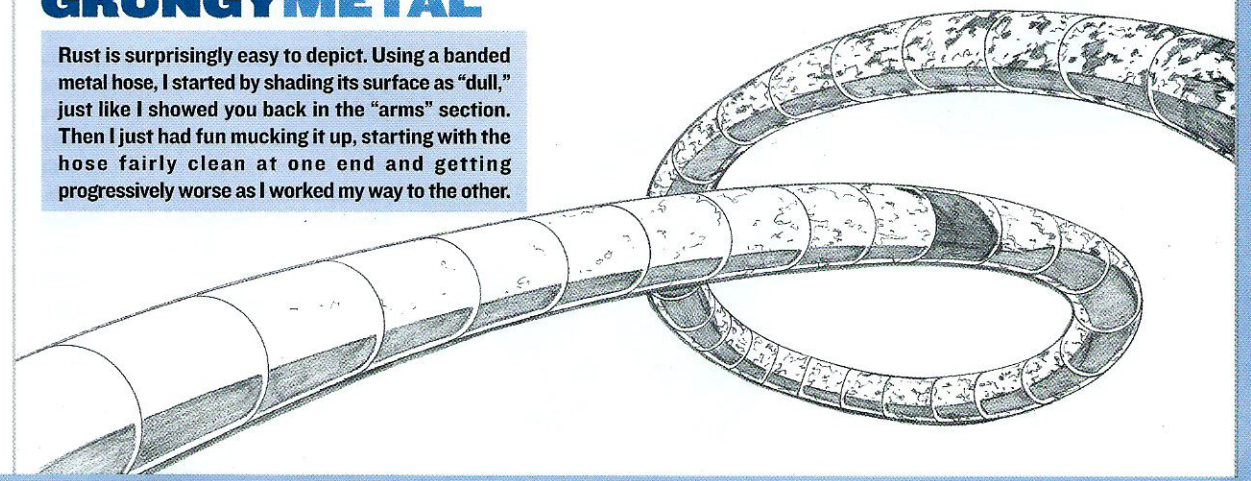
PRO TIPS

GET PHYSICAL

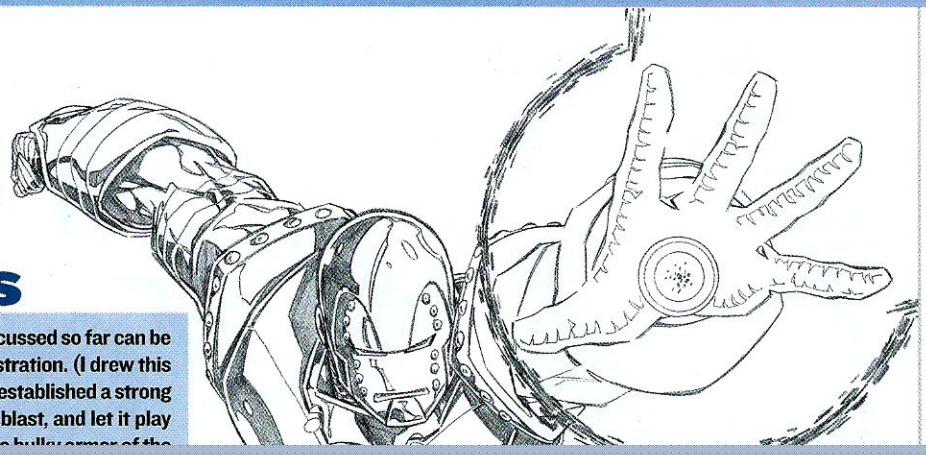
"We have such sedentary jobs and we work late hours, and physically, it's really grinding. So go out and play sports, exercise, run, jog, something. If you're thinking of a career in comics, it helps to have that sense of competition you get playing sports." —Jim Lee, *All Star Batman & Robin*

GRUNGY METAL

Rust is surprisingly easy to depict. Using a banded metal hose, I started by shading its surface as "dull," just like I showed you back in the "arms" section. Then I just had fun mucking it up, starting with the hose fairly clean at one end and getting progressively worse as I worked my way to the other.



METALLICSURFACES



IRONOUT THEKINKS

Basically everything we've discussed so far can be seen here in this Iron Man illustration. (I drew this armor in *Iron Man* #325.) I've established a strong light source with the repulsor blast, and let it play out along the various forms: the bulky armor of the

WILDLIFE

Animals in this category start to appear on the fringes of our civilization and roam mostly unpopulated lands. Because of this, these creatures have a bit of mystery and majesty to them and often come to symbolize freedom. Keep this in mind when drawing them. They should look a bit more proud and exotic than the everyday pet or farm animal.

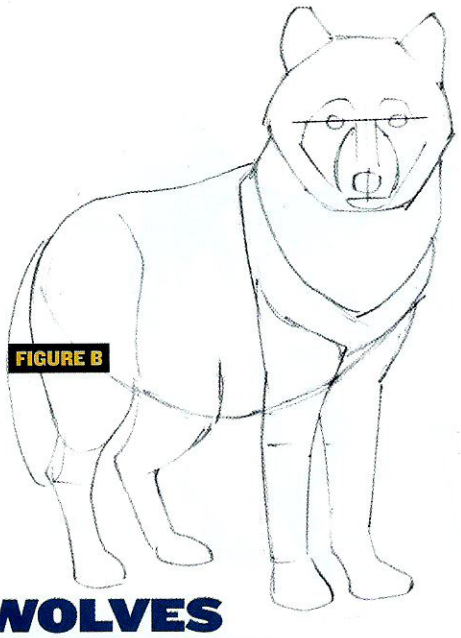


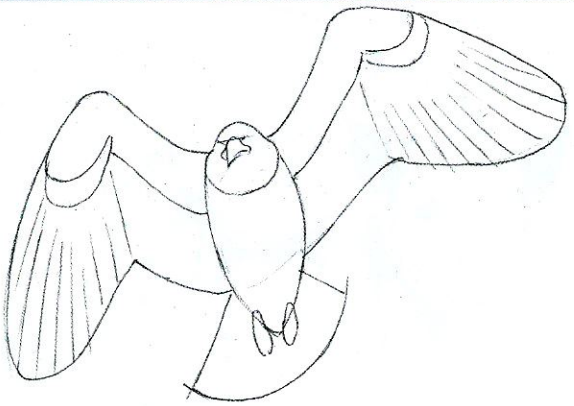
FIGURE B

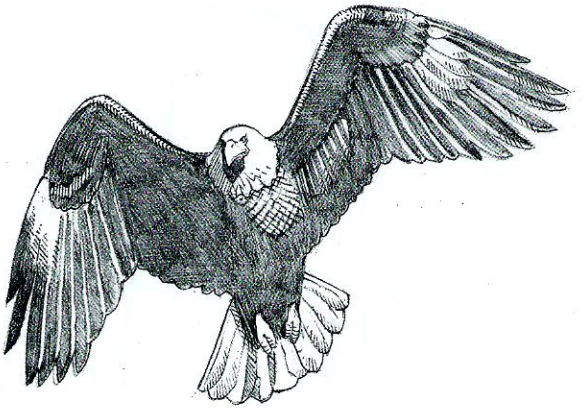


WOLVES

Referring back to the texture chart at the start of the lesson, a good skill to develop here is being able to represent a full tonal range from complete black to light with each particular mark-making system. In the fur close-up, the curved lines are grouped in tapered "C" or "S" shaped locks, where the foreground locks overlap the ones behind it to give the illusion of depth. You can apply this thinking to drawing animals such as wolves.

With a wolf, the body construction is very similar to its close cousin the dog. A different mark-making system represents different types of fur. Its upper body is covered by a layered, lush, mink-like coat, and on the legs I used a coarser texture.





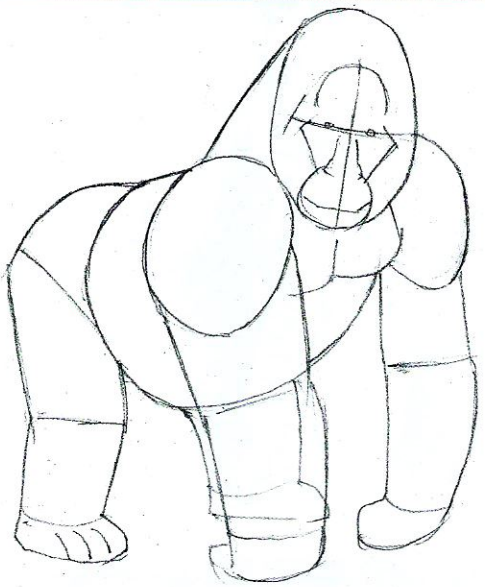
BIRDS

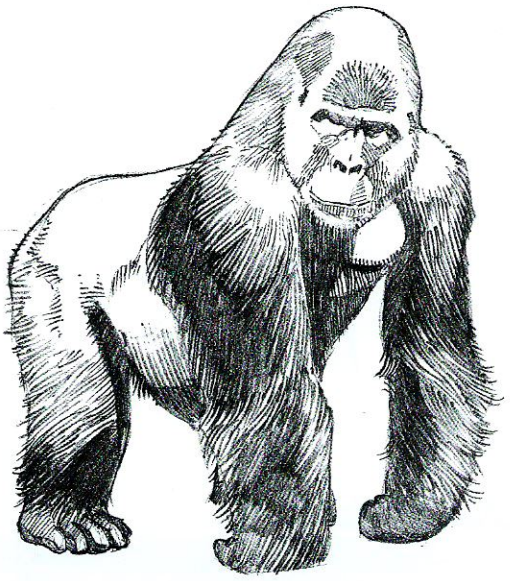
In most cases, you don't need to and shouldn't draw every feather or hair on an animal. To do so might only serve to flatten it out. In this drawing of an eagle, only some feathers are drawn. The rest are obscured in shadow or light. Your mind's eye has a way of filling in the rest.

Because of the constraints necessary for flight, birds have an anatomy that is vastly different from all other animals. The upside is that its body has evolved into very basic shapes and the legs are very much downplayed. It's all about the wings, however. Before you get bogged down trying to draw the individual feathers in the large array, find and draw the basic overall shapes and subdivide them into the smaller shapes.

THE JUNGLE

Here is where we find the most exotic animals. As we move farther out from our world and into foreign lands, we come across animals that are truly out of the ordinary. There is a diversity in size, shape and color with jungle animals that can make them downright fun to draw. This is where your variety and expertise in mark-making systems are pushed to the limits.

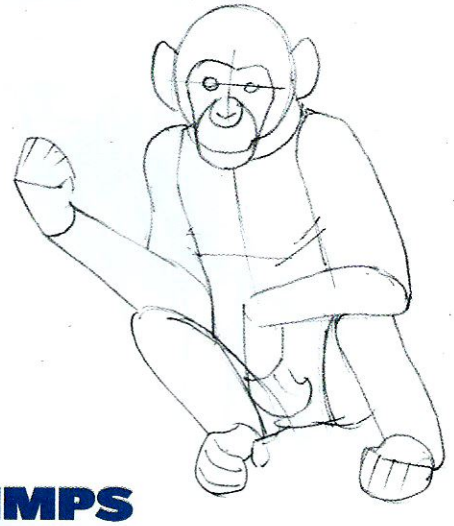


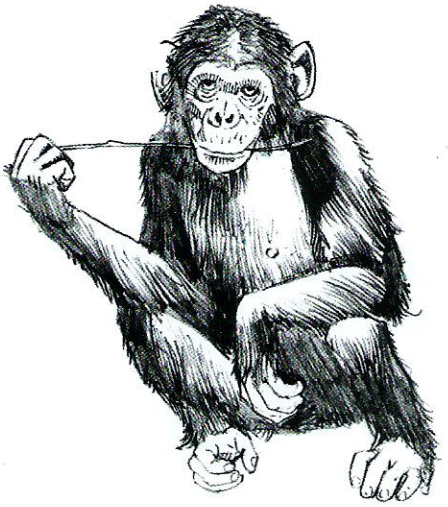


GORILLAS

The limbs of this gorilla become like large cylindrical tree trunks in which the specific anatomy is conveniently obscured by long hair. The important thing to convey is the sheer brute power through the proportionally larger upper body.

Unlike our appendages, the gorilla's arms are longer and more powerful than its legs. There are two differing characteristics that are often associated with gorillas that you may want to focus on when drawing them: raw power or quiet intelligence. The latter is achieved through their eyes that can emote much like our own.

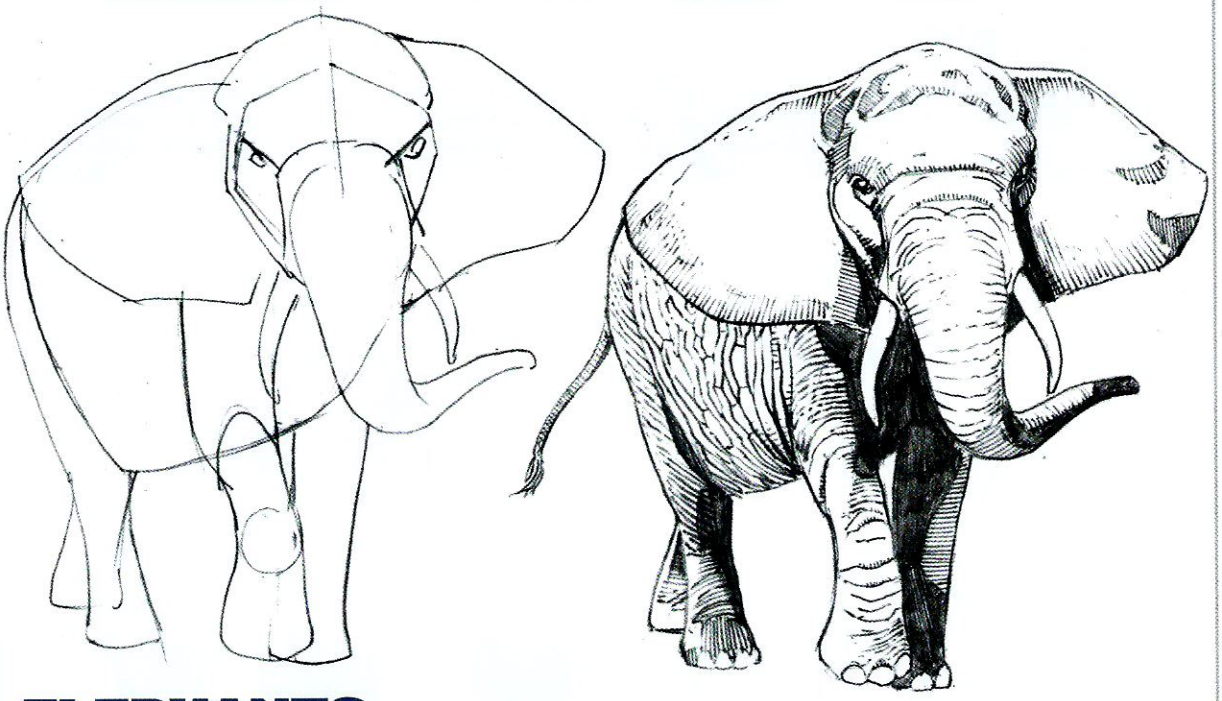




CHIMPS

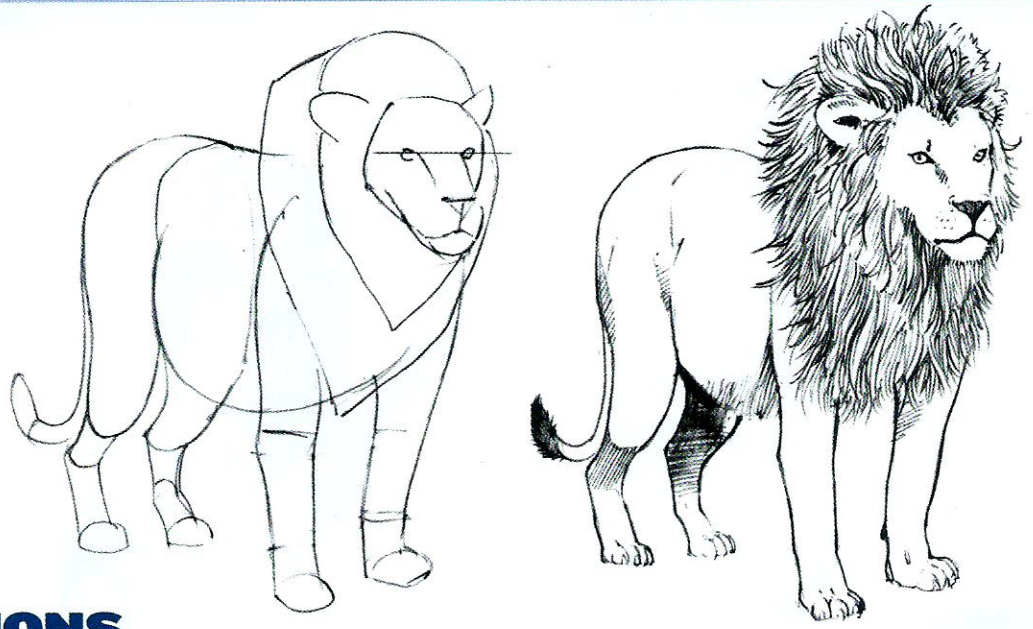
The chimpanzee is our closest relative and therefore we see a lot of us in them. The body and limbs are covered in long fur, which means you only have to capture their basic shapes. In general, the arms are the dominant limbs, leaving the legs to seem under-scaled to us. The feet resemble the hands, which are also only capable of simple grasping.

There is a definite similarity to the gorilla except that the basic anatomy is linier rather than massive. This causes us to see them as much less threatening and therefore more playful and clowning. The forward-set eyes give them an undeniably humanlike face and make them the animal with the most expressive face.



ELEPHANTS

The elephant's skin can best be described as coarse and wrinkly, hanging loosely on its massive frame. All of the complex anatomy is obscured by this thick blanket of hide. The wrinkles help describe round volumes by following the contours of the body. Try to capture the effect of tons of weight on this frame transferred down the legs into the ground. Elephants are known as noble creatures. This characteristic might come across by playing up the wrinkles, which imply wisdom that comes with age.

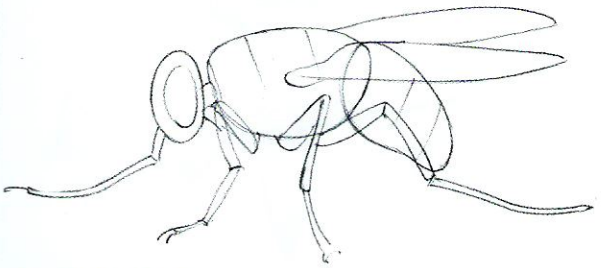


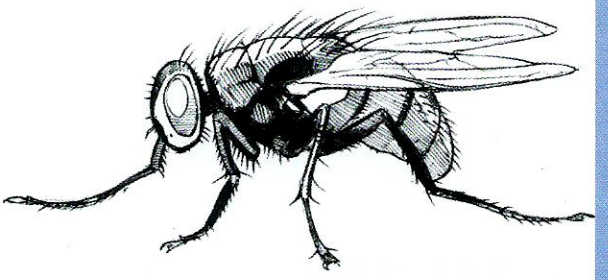
LIONS

Often proclaimed "king of the jungle," the lion is depicted as both regal and dangerous. This reputation is reflected in its appearance. The body is proportioned to accentuate the features of power and speed. The anatomy is lean and muscular; the jaws are massive, as are its paws. The long flowing mane befits its regal nature. To capture this all-important feature, draw the "C" and "S" shaped lines that are gathered together in locks and are layered back to get the full and soft look. All in all, look to capture the elements that put this predator confidently on the top of the food chain.

INSECTS&REPTILES

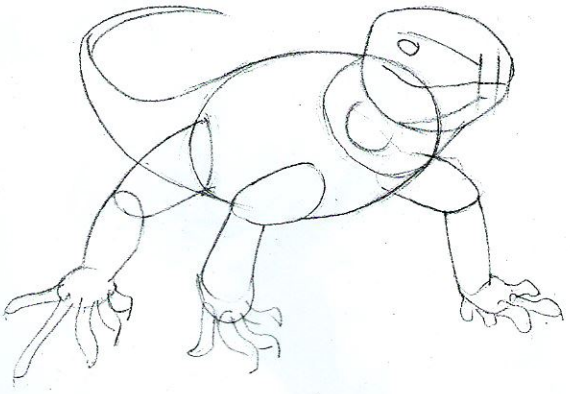
This creature category is far removed from anatomy that we are familiar with. For this reason, they are often used in stories to evoke creepiness or mistrust. However, it is their alien bodies that make them so fun to draw. You almost have to throw out what you know about mammalian anatomy because it won't help you here. Insects and reptiles employ the more unusual mark-making systems, such as scales and hard, shiny plates.

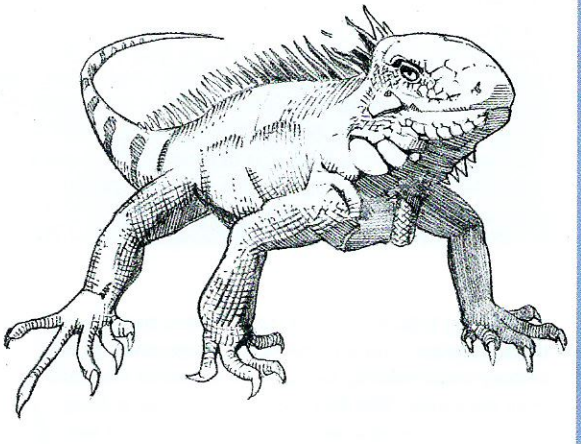




FLIES

The main difference that separates insects from all other animals is that they have an exoskeleton. This is drawn as hard organic segments. Its tiny body is made up of interesting basic shapes covered in segmented armor plates. Insects, like the fly shown above, are the few of nature's creations that allow you to engage the shiny metallic texture usually reserved for manmade objects. Insects have more of a precise structure to them that allows you to see the shapes clearly without being obscured by flesh.





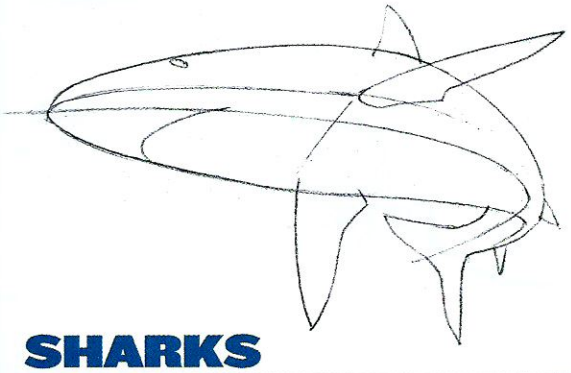
LIZARDS

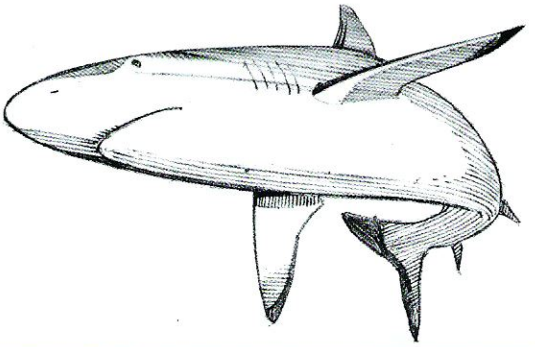
This lizard is an exercise in representing a scaly texture. In this case a fine grid pattern represents the mid tones that fade off as they move towards areas awash in light. Overall its body is very linear. Pay attention to the curve or curves of its length as it tapers toward the tail.

When drawing the scales close up, drawing every scale with an outline will result in a flat, wallpaper look. Instead, I focused on its shadow side and dropped out the outline altogether as the scales moved toward the light. This gives the texture a more realistic, natural feel.

THESEA

Because the sea is a completely different environment, it makes sense that it drastically affects all the creatures that make it their world. Most noticeably, it tends to make them all streamlined and tapered. Hands and feet give way to flippers and fins. Other than that, there seems to be an infinite variety of sizes and shapes, and sometimes dramatic color and patterns too diverse to be generalized. Like insects, they tend to have a more precise structure that is simplified to be aerodynamic and uncomplicated by obscuring hide.





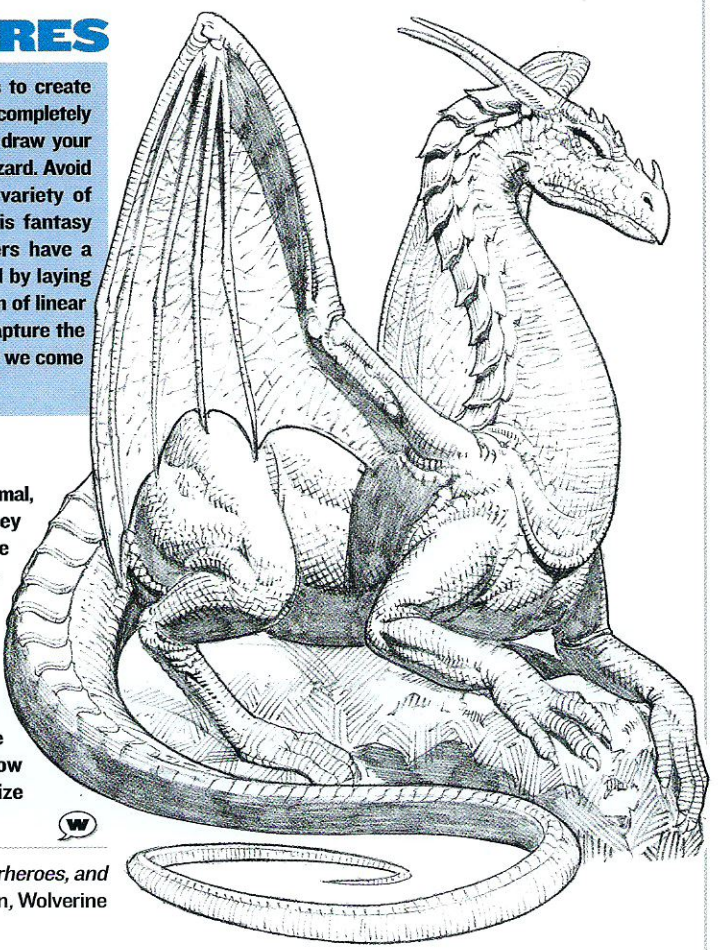
SHARKS

Try to capture the simple gestural sweep of its aerodynamic shape. The challenge here is to represent the smooth skin by choosing a mark-making system that doesn't imply any texture. I chose to do this by having the shading lines run parallel along the length and follow the curve of its body.

Sharks are the ultimate predator of the deep and their bodies reflect that. They resemble a fighter jet with razor-sharp teeth in numbers that shock and awe.

FANTASYCREATURES

You can apply your knowledge of real-world animals to create anything your mind can imagine. Since the anatomy is completely made up for our dragon here, to make it convincing, draw your influence from other animals. In this case, I used the lizard. Avoid letting human anatomy creep in. I tried to use a variety of mark-making systems to help sell the idea that this fantasy creature is real. Some areas are scaly, while others have a lizardy feel. The wings have a leathery feel achieved by laying down random scratchy lines. Its body is a combination of linear and massive portions. A big part of the effect is to capture the meandering snakelike curves in the neck and tail that we come to recognize in creepy lizards.



ANYTIME YOU ARE CALLED UPON to draw an animal, there is always a purpose behind its appearance, as they embody characteristics that elicit an emotional response from the viewer. Whether it is to evoke a warm fuzzy feeling by showing a loyal dog or creeping you out with the sudden appearance of a giant spider, animals have become props and even characters in stories because they come charged with an emotional context that is universal. The characteristics we attribute to each animal come from its design. Nature has done almost all the work for you. Your part is to identify how the forms convey the feeling and capture it to maximize the effect.

Sean Chen can draw any creature, from sharks to superheroes, and has proven it expertly in titles such as Marvel's Iron Man, Wolverine *and* X-Men: The End.

MONSTERS

BY DOUG MAHNKE



When I first began to draw at the ripe old age of 2, monsters were on my A-list. Day and night I penciled out mindless beasts in crude fashion. At roughly age 5 my grandmother asked me to draw something nice. The best I could do was a face filled with ladybugs. Many of my teachers were consumed, stomped or gutted by monsters on the backs of homework assignments.

Basically, monsters were a big part of my childhood, so I feel kinda qualified to teach a thing or two about drawing them. Sometimes the mind just needs a little spark to get going. So let the horror-fest begin...

BODYSHOP

Monsters come in an endless variety of shapes and sizes, limited only by your sick, twisted imagination. To simplify things, let's concentrate on humanoid monsters—those which resemble us somewhat as opposed to some quivering, globulous mass slithering up from the bounds of Hell. (Although that's a lot of fun to draw, too!)

To start, let's imagine a few templates—monsters most of us are familiar with. From left to right, they include the ill-formed hunchback, the rotting zombie, the mindless brute and the winged devil. Toss in a snake and a spider for good measure.

A closer look at our hunchback reveals a simple yet effective approach to any monster: a lack of symmetry or alignment of body parts. The arms and legs are mismatched and the head's at an odd angle. Imagine that any movement causes pain. As for the others, the zombie's more bones than muscle, the brute is muscle on muscle (note how his knees buckle inward and his torso rolls in upon itself), and the devil's just real sneaky-looking as he tiptoes on his goat legs.

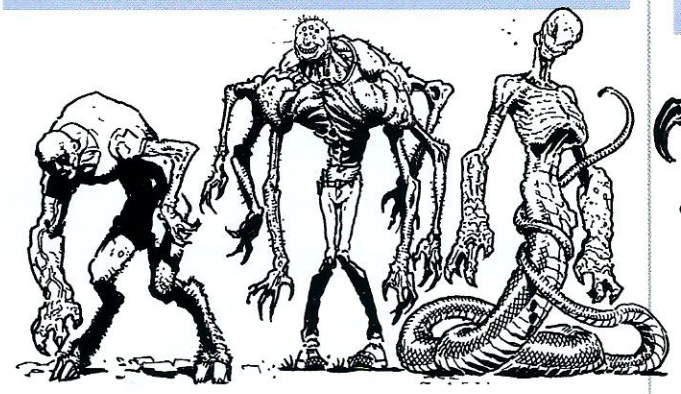


PHOTO: PAUL SCHRADI

MONSTERCOMBOS

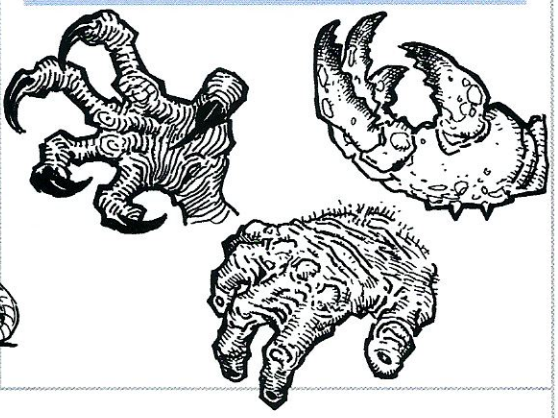
Here's the fun part. I've made some simple amalgams based on our previous group and come up with three new monsters. When creating freakish creatures, it can be as simple as stitching ill-matched parts together. Look closely to see exactly what I used. Notice how the snake and spider (at a much larger size) were incorporated.

Now, some combinations may not work as well as others. Putting large devil wings on our little hunchback, or just two little spindly arms on our brute, wouldn't exactly create a more frightening image. On the other hand, having the snake coiled about the zombie while the spider crawled out of his mouth would most certainly work. Just keep practicing and you'll soon learn what works and what doesn't. Basically, show your mom: If she screams, it works.



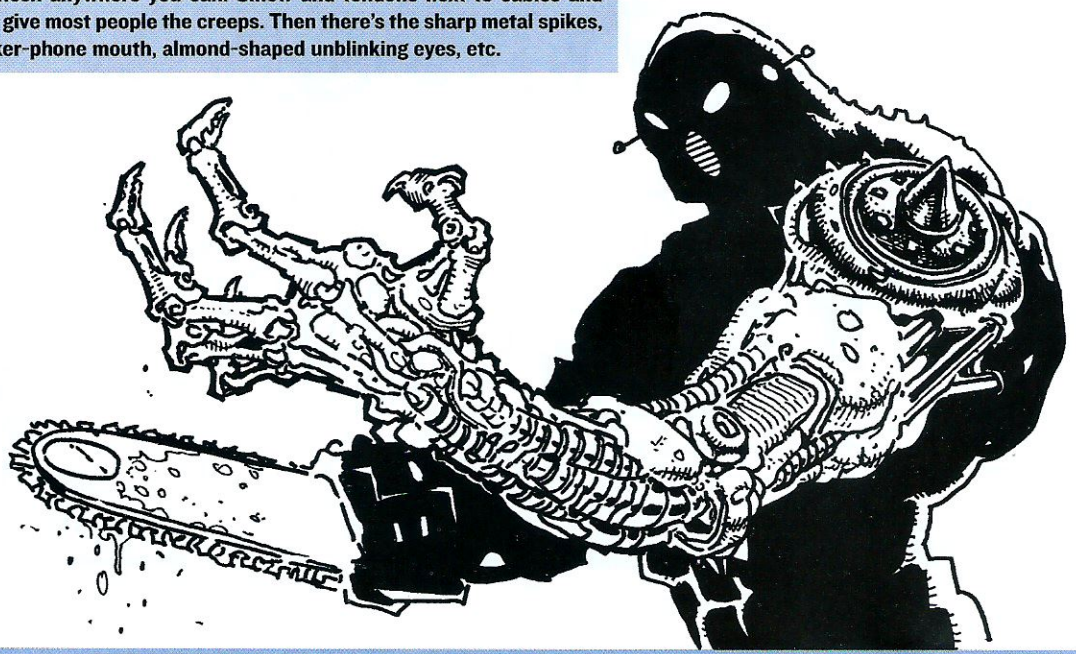
GETTINGHANDY

When looking for inspiration, the animal world offers excellent opportunities. These hands are based on what should be obvious: the talon of a raptor, the hand of an ape and the claw of a crab. And they're all suitable for monster use. Talons are actually my favorite for monster use since they're seriously adapted to grasping soft flesh tightly (ugh) and tearing humans to pieces. The hands of lizards are also great, as are octopus tentacles, with their suckers and merciless grasp. When adding animal parts to human form, however, you have to decide: How much will make a monster of the man, or a bit of a man out of a monster? In other words, do you want your creature looking more like a human or an animal?



MACHINEMAN

Machines can provide excellent inspiration for monster design. A mingling of flesh with everyday household tools and gadgetry can be frightening. Traditional horror movie props such as the chainsaw give our creature that non-symmetrical edge. I could have just as well used an outboard motor, circular saw, drill ax or any other instrument that can cut or smash us humans to pieces. Just remember to mix the metal with flesh anywhere you can. Sinew and tendons next to cables and wires give most people the creeps. Then there's the sharp metal spikes, speaker-phone mouth, almond-shaped unblinking eyes, etc.



PUTYOUR HEADSTOGETHER

Here's a closer look at head design. We have two very different creatures—the zombie **(Figure A)**, with his shriveled, dehydrated look, and the thickly featured brute **(Figure B)**. By combining elements of both we achieve a "zombrutie" **(Figure C)**. This is only one of many possible combinations, but you get the idea.

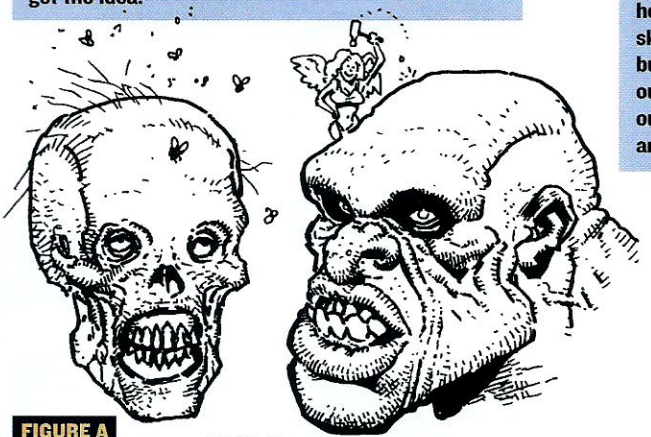


FIGURE A

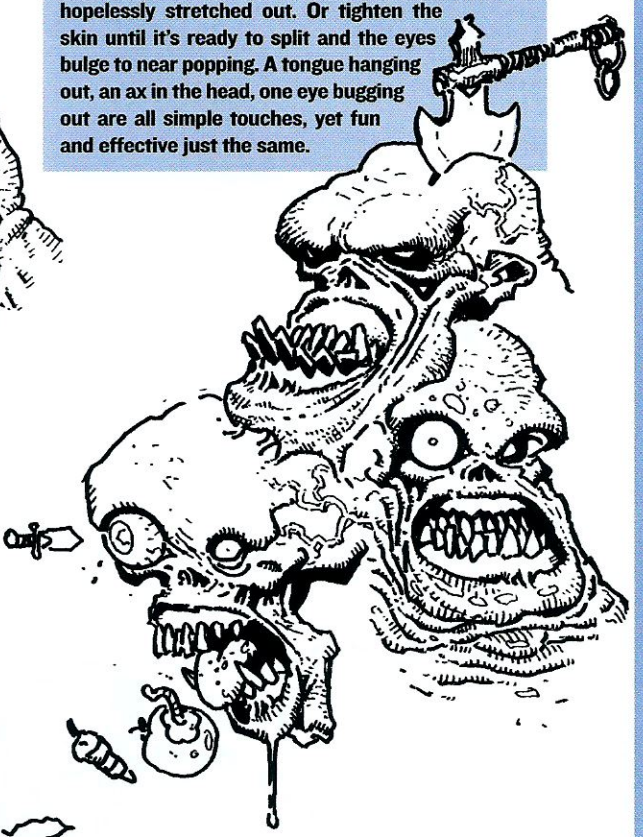
FIGURE B

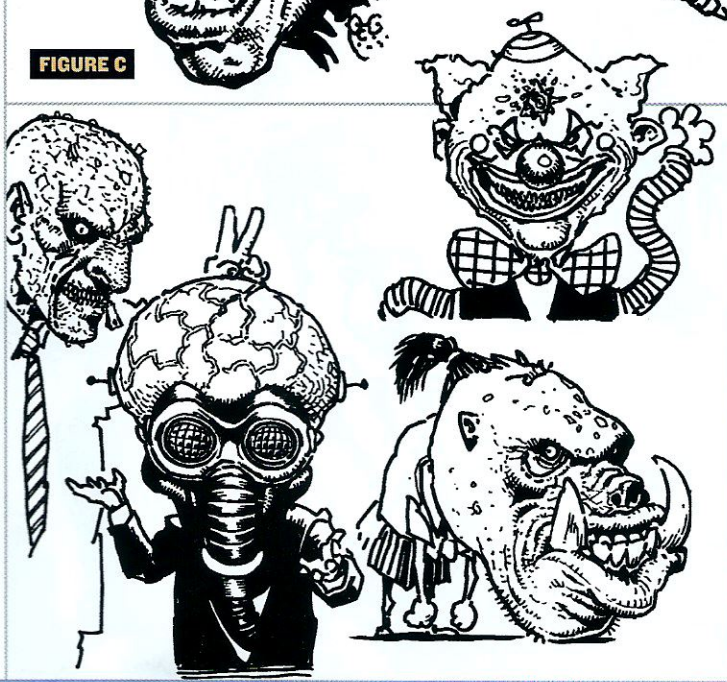


FIGURE C

Now that we've established a look, let's take it a step further and put a funhouse-mirror spin on it. This is always a good approach for any monster when you're looking for something new.

Squash, stretch and twist to your heart's content. If the brow is thick and protruding, smash it way down over the eyes until the entire head is mashed in. Or pull a protruding jaw way out and don't spare the teeth—separate them, crowd them, blunt them, sharpen them, whatever. Pull the lips until they're hopelessly stretched out. Or tighten the skin until it's ready to split and the eyes bulge to near popping. A tongue hanging out, an ax in the head, one eye bugging out are all simple touches, yet fun and effective just the same.





INSPIRATION MEANS PERSPIRATION

It doesn't take much sometimes—charred flesh and a zipper for a mouth, a bulbous head with a strange gas mask. Inspiration can come from just about anywhere. Sometimes you're lucky and odd things just pop into your head. The big, swollen head with the weird gas-mask face was actually based on an elephant. The tusky fellow came about because I asked my two daughters what was scary. One said a big dog, the other said a pig. I blended the two and added a bit of human. Children already think clowns are scary, so I added an impossibly large, evil grin and small, sharp, cannibal teeth. Children's nightmares just got a bit spookier.

FACETHEHORROR

Okay, let's pull some of this together and fine-tune it. Start with the head, modeled after our "zombrutie." One eye is large and bloodshot, staring out with evil intentions. I like to put extra baggage around eyes like these, giving 'em that weird, never-sleeps look. The other eye is small and dead, probably made lifeless from some horrible wound, now sewn up and scarred. The ears are rotting with bits missing, the jaw misaligned with a serious



VEHICLES

BY SEAN CHEN

You may think it's unfair that some superheroes can fly while others can't. But don't feel bad, because the flightless ones have something their soaring counterparts don't: cool rides! Just how cool depends on your ability to design and draw them.

In college, I majored in industrial design; this instilled in me a love for the design and rendering of man-made objects. So I'm here to teach you all about drawing vehicles. Whether it's the Avengers' Quinjet or just the necessary props of an average street scene, vehicles are everywhere. Grab your learner's permit and buckle up. You're well on your way to getting your artistic license.

CARCARE

Let's start with a basic car—drawing one can be broken down into four easy steps. First, I box in the general shape to determine the size, proportion and view (**Figure A**). All we're trying to do at this stage is rough out the shape and provide guidelines for the later stages. It's always a good idea to evaluate what you have at each step to make sure it's in line with your original vision before proceeding.

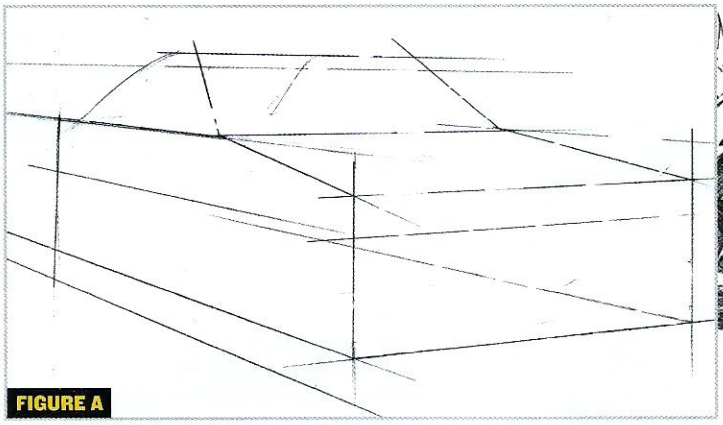


FIGURE A

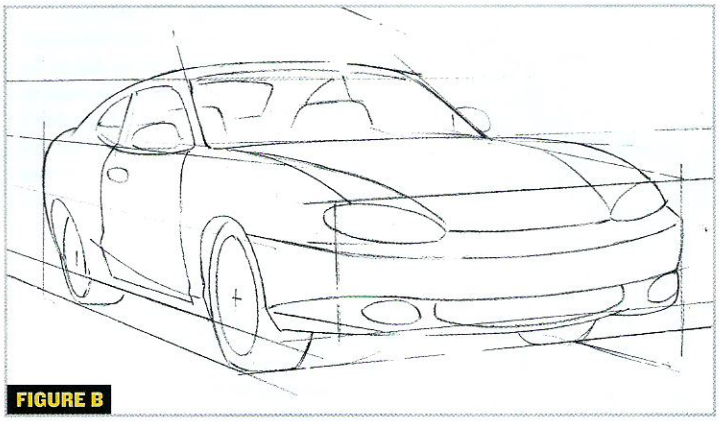


FIGURE B



Second, I draw the major shapes of the car, referring carefully to the perspective guidelines to assure structure and symmetry (**Figure B**). Most cars—especially the sporty variety—are made entirely of curves, but you need to be aware of the straight perspective lines that those curves came from in order to draw them convincingly.

PRO TIPS

MONEY TALKS

"If your goal is to be rich, go learn the stock market. If your goal is to be adored, learn to play guitar and be a rock star. Art punishes you, and you have to love the punishment."
—Darick Robertson, *Nightcrawler*

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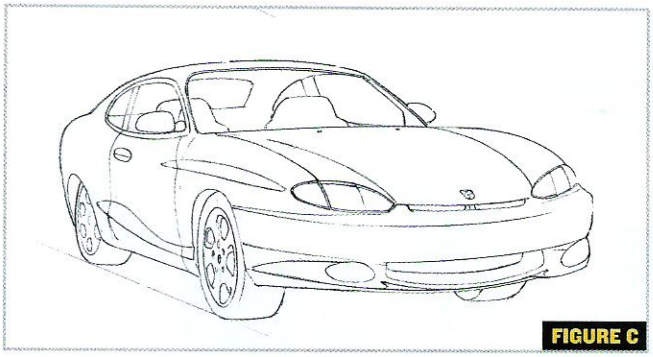


FIGURE C

Third, I continue to add more of the lines that embellish the car and all of its parts and shapes (**Figure C**). Always work from the general to the specific; that is, make sure that the general form of the headlight is in the right place and of the right size and shape before adding any detail, like shapes within or glass texture. At this stage, we have a finished line drawing.

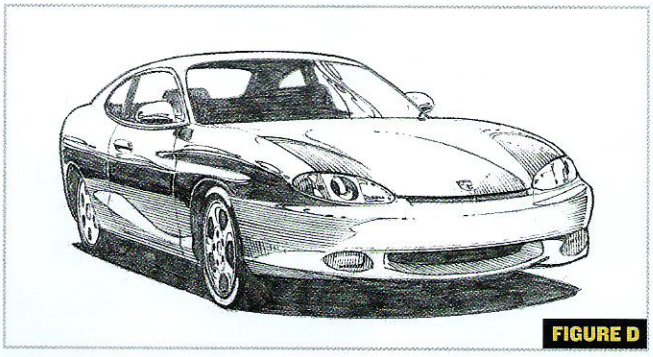
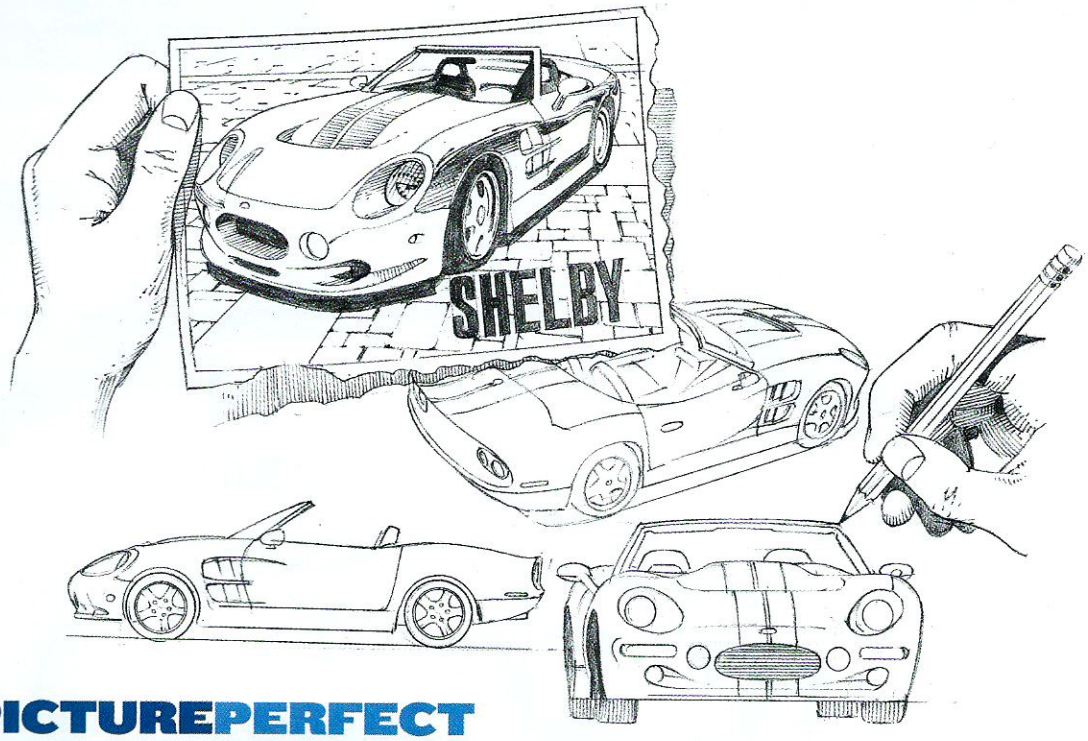


FIGURE D

Fourth, I add the rendering (**Figure D**). This adds weight and solidity to the drawing and provides realism. On any given car, we are rendering painted metal, shiny chrome, transparent glass, etc. Observe how these materials appear in real life, and stylize them to convey the unique properties of each. Don't forget they cast shadow on the ground! And since the windows are transparent, you can usually see a silhouette of the interior through the other windows. Notice how the partial glare on the right suggests the presence of a windshield by obscuring the interior silhouette. Ah, can't you practically smell that new-car smell?



PICTUREPERFECT

Because cars are such complex machines, I like to use reference material, especially if the car is featured fairly prominently. Most of the time, the angle of the car you're drawing won't match the shot of the car in your photo, so you'll have to improvise. A very useful skill to develop is the ability to rotate the car in your mind and extrapolate any view you need. It's not as hard as you think; nearly all the information you need is provided in a good three-fourths view. The only side we don't see is the back. Remember, the car is symmetrical, and fits within a basic perspective box. Just make sure that the car maintains the same proportions and doesn't become too long or too compact as the viewing angle changes.

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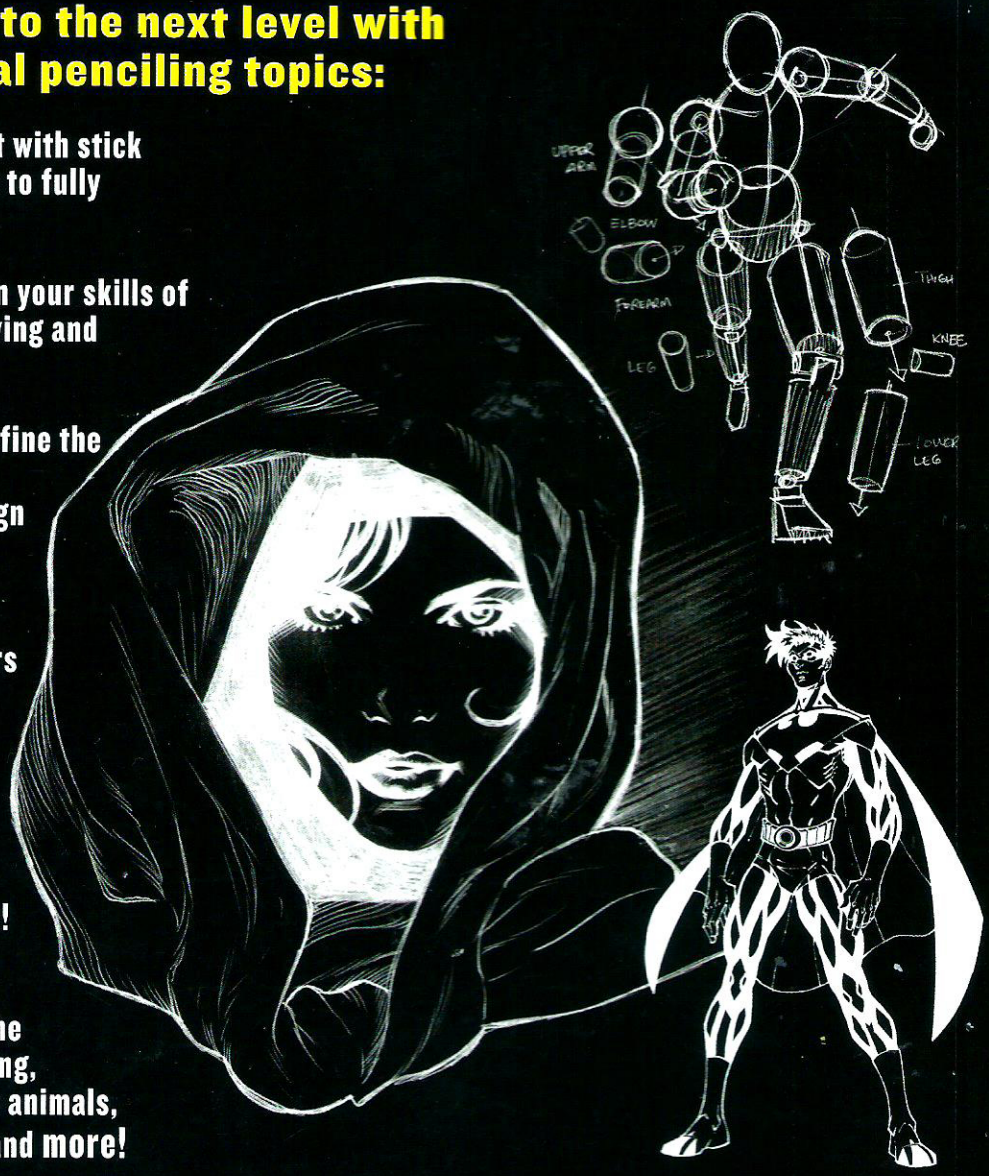
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